WHAT IS YOURS ?

G. RAY JORDAN

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WHAT IS YOURS?

AND OTHER SERMONS

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

By
G. RAY JORDAN
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Introduction by
BISHOP EDWIN D. MOUZON
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To the
Memory of My Father,

CHARLES MARION JORDAN,

Who, Because of the Love He Had for His Son,
and the Ministry to Which He Had Been Called,
Encouraged and Assisted Him in His
Special Preparation for the Ministry,
for Nearly Eight Years; and Then,
Just a Few Months Before His
Son's Ordination, Entered Into
the Life Eternal.

INTRODUCING THE PREACHER

THE Rev. G. Ray Jordan is one of the younger preachers in the Church in the South, who by virtue of thorough academic and theological training, diligent attention to the details of the pastoral office, and consecration to the work of the ministry has made for himself a secure place of influence and usefulness as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He has his Bachelor's degree from Duke University, his Divinity degree from Emory, and his Master's degree from Yale. Habits of study formed in college and university days have been continued through the years of his active ministry. His careful and systematic work as a pastor has brought him into intimate contact with old and young in all walks of life, in the country community, in the college church, and now as pastor of a flourishing church in the largest city in North Carolina.

The sermons in this volume were not written primarily to be printed; they were written to be preached; and *have* been preached to large and appreciative congregations. Mr. Jordan is pastor of the church where my family worship, and it has been my privilege to hear a number of these sermons delivered. Under this kind of preaching the congregation has grown in size and the church has rapidly increased in membership. It will be seen that the preacher's view-

point, while distinctly modern, is at the same time essentially evangelical. It is both the one and the other. Mr. Jordan is one of the few ministers in the South who has built up a larger congregation for the evening service than for the morning hour. This grows out of the fact that people from various parts of the city, from other communions, and especially young people, find in his preaching a living voice speaking to their needs. And what is specially significant is the fact that the congregation at Dilworth Church is not made up of intellectuals. There are, indeed, in its membership teachers, and lawyers, and members of other professions; but the large majority are business men, and housewives, and young men and women who work for their daily bread. My point is that here in this volume will be found the kind of preaching which, as a matter of demonstrated fact, does appeal to all sorts of and conditions of people today.

It is for this reason that I believe their publication in book form will do good. They are an honest and fearless presentation of the truth; and as such I do not doubt will be welcomed by honest and earnest seekers after truth and righteousness and God.

EDWIN D. MOUZON.

Charlotte, N. C.

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I

WHAT IS YOURS?

"All things are yours."—I CORINTHIANS 3:21.

ONE of the most astounding sentences ever written is the one which gives us our text. Yet, the way Paul came to make it was as natural, and even as logical, as he could have planned it to be, though it seems to have fallen spontaneously from his lips as he dictated to his amanuensis. He was writing the Corinthians about the folly of factions and the harm of divisions. "Don't centre on Apollos, or Cephas, or Paul," he says; "be unified in Christ, and then accept the best from each one of these men. Don't glory in any one or anything which has caused, or which will cause, a division. Not only is such a course harmful to the cause of Christ; it is unwise as far as you personally are concerned." Paul was unquestionably most concerned about the harm of divisions. But he also indicates the fact of inevitable loss sustained by any person who centres on one good to the exclusion of other benefits. The Christian, he says, is to receive benefits and blessings from absolutely every source.

So it is the apostle finds himself entering an expansive realm of intellectual and spiritual truth. When once he has started to speak, his words flow freely

with the enthusiasm of a discoverer of some new, rich treasure. Surely he has struck a mine of truth filled with spiritual nuggets of fine gold. Not merely all men, he says, not merely what they have that is good, but *all things* are yours, absolutely everything is yours. The world, life, death, things present, things to come—all are yours. How the words scintillate with brilliancy! How they strike us! How they grip and startle our minds! "All things are yours."

What does he mean? What can he mean? To ask the question seems to find Paul answering it himself. He tells us he means exactly what he says. One can almost see the positive look of assurance on the face of the apostle. He certainly has spoken plainly enough for one to realize that everything is included.

I

As a matter of fact, the best things in this life are ours, if we but understand what is best. The air we breathe belongs to no one man. It is free for all. There is no life without it; it is yours. Ours! The caressing breezes, the refreshing rain, the brightening sunshine—all these are yours. Does the physical universe have anything to offer which is better than these gifts, and what these gifts represent?

Physicians tell us sunshine and fresh air are the best two medicines in the world. They are preventive medicines, too! "Blessed sun," cried Carlyle, "it is sent to all living, and the whole wealth of the bank of England is not equal to one beam of it." It is said

that Alexander, full of the pride of recent triumphs, one day came upon Diogenes. Diogenes was enjoying the glory of the noonday sun. The great king condescended to speak to the philosopher. He wanted to know if there was anything that the mighty Alexander could do for Diogenes. "Yes," was the reply, "Alexander can step aside from between me and the sunshine." Diogenes was no fool. The sunshine was more than Alexander could give, far better than his very richest gifts.

The best gifts we share with each other, because they are ours all together. No one has a corner on the market of the best. It is impossible to buy even the "margin" on it.

"I learned it on the meadow path,
I learned it on the mountain stairs,
The best things any mortal hath
Are those which every mortal shares."

II

The common blessings of mankind belong to you, of course. One easily discerns this. There are other possessions, however, possible for all people who realize their privileges. It is only necessary that one lay hold on his inheritance.

In the intellectual world everything belongs to those who will seize it. The walls which separate any person from mental treasures are erected by the individual concerned, and not another. There are no great thoughts, no celebrated discoveries that are of practical value, which are not yours, or may be made

yours. The truths of life have been and are being recorded; books are accessible; knowledge is free for all. Every person can make the best use possible of the mental treasures of the ages. These riches are not hoarded. They are free for all. What a store of riches for us!

When one thinks in national or international terms, the words of Paul are as apropos and as fresh, as though they had been written today—that is, for those who have the capacity to understand. One must only realize the truth. Those who will listen, hear. Surely there is much to hear. We do know that the best in any section of the country, or in any nation of the world, may be appreciated by those whose souls have no barriers. Robert E. Lee belongs to the North, as well as to the South. Robert E. Lee is America's. No, Lee belongs to the world! Abraham Lincoln does not belong to one state, or to one section, or to one country. He is as much the South's as he is the North's. He belongs to the world. No real citizen of North Carolina, or of Alabama, or of London will lose the good and the great in Lincoln just because he happens not to be from this individual's neighbourhood.

The greatest, the wisest, and the best the world has produced are ours. They are all ours, if we can but know the truth and make it real. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, though Greeks, are ours. Luther and Gœthe, though Germans, are ours. Paderewski and Kreisler, John Knox and John Wesley, Moses and Amos, St. John and St. Paul—they are all

ours. One needs only to understand the truth and make it real.

Certainly the same assertion may be made in regard to religion. If Paul's words have any significance at all it is just here. Do not narrow yourself to one man. Do not turn to one group, only. Cephas is all right, but Apollos is yours, too. Paul may be able to help you, but John has a gift, also. Oh, he is saying, do not narrow your life or your religious activities. Eliminate no good man or no good message. If you are robbing yourself, you are not adopting a very wise policy. And you certainly are robbing yourself when you eliminate the good which any one can give you. There is good in each one; make that good yours. It all rightfully belongs to you. Partisanship or sectarianism is foolish. It results in loss, personal and positive loss, and you should not lose anything, for all is yours! This is Paul's message.

What a rebuke the apostle's statement is to narrow religious living! No one has all the truth; no one has all the good; and all should be yours. When you and I realize what we possess, we will receive good from every possible source.

There are people who permit themselves to be tagged. They are liberals, or progressives, or modernists, or fundamentalists. Surely Paul would belong to none of these parties. He would claim the good in each of them. The wise Christian will do the same. He will make all the good in every religious organization his own. Just so he will claim all the good there is in every religious teacher. He will absorb all the

truth he can discover. He will make every bit of truth, goodness, and beauty his possession. This is what Emerson suggests when he says:

"I am the owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain."

III

This suggests an even further depth to which Paul goes. He refers to some things even more difficult to make one's own than information or knowledge or right mental attitudes. Indeed, as he goes into the realm of spiritual things, he still insists: "All things are yours."

Before we can apprehend what the apostle means in regard to these matters, it will be necessary for us to understand how one comes to make anything his very own. This is the primary question, and it is of vital importance. There is no need to talk about what belongs to one, unless one knows how to gain possession of it. How, therefore, does one really come to appropriate anything?

In the first place, we know it cannot be said that anything is acquired by one unless he lays hold of it in some way. That means that the higher values must be taken up, taken in, and received somehow. No one can receive the intangible values of life unless he appreciates and understands them. As a matter of fact, one must make them a part of his inner life, if he really possesses them. The meaning and purpose of any experience must be realized, grasped mentally

and spiritually, before one can make it his own. Then he must make it a part of his inner life.

A legal deed does not really grant one the ownership of anything. It is spiritual grasp by means of which one actually takes to himself what is in his experience that guarantees appropriation. There is a morning's sunrise. One looks at it. It is all there, and one is looking at it, but is it his? It depends. One can just glance at it, and get a blurred vision; but that will not mean much. Then one can look with the eyes of the artist. He can drink in the spiritual meaning of it all. With his soul he can take that marvellous vision to himself; into his soul it comes. He opens his heart, and lets the morning's sunrise in. The vision is painted on the canvas of his mind. The meaning is grasped by his intellect, at least to some extent. The purpose of it is understood by his heart. His love of the beautiful makes him receive forever that morning's sunrise! What a glorious thing it is! What a heavenly, rich experience! No one can ever take it away. It will always be part of one. It belongs to those highest treasures which neither moth nor rust can corrupt. It is where thieves cannot break through nor steal. Thus does one make any real value his very own.

A person, however, must have such an open mind and heart if he comes really to get hold of anything. All is ours, in this way, if we make it ours. All is ours if we understand, if we can see, if we can spiritually grasp and receive it. Poetry is yours, and music is yours, only when you enter into its meaning, know

how to interpret it, understand it. Whatever is any person's becomes his only as he lets it become part of himself. Appreciation and understanding and spiritual grasp guarantee real possession.

When we realize this fact, we can enter into the meaning of Paul's startling, but glorious statement. The apostle talks like a wise man; he is no oratorical fanatic. He has discovered a great truth, a glorious, a heavenly fact.

Life itself is spiritual, and it must, therefore, be spiritually understood, if one really lives. Existence and life are not the same thing. The purpose of life must be grasped if one enters into its meaning and makes his own its significance. If, indeed, life is ours, we must have the right conception of it, correctly esteem its value, and properly use it. When one does this, one lives, because he understands how to live. There has never been a more meaningful or satisfactory life than that of Jesus Christ. Here is life at its highest and best. Jesus knew how to live. When we learn His spirit and have His outlook and attitude, we will be able to say that life is ours.

Thus things present and things to come are ours in the same way. They only go to make up the experiences of life. We rightly interpret their meaning, and discriminatingly judge their significance. We become learners, and knowledge which comes, lingers to give us wisdom.

But here is one who insists we are taking in too much territory. He says Paul lost control of himself. Oratory was substituted for good judgment. For the

apostle says "all things," and that means all experiences, even the evil ones. Surely men cannot satisfactorily interpret evil. It is still the perplexing problem of life. Man is still in a quandary about it. Evil seems to possess us; we do not intellectually lay hold of it. Possibly not; but we do know this: Jesus so used the evil experiences which came in His life that He even forced them to yield good. Unnumbered followers of His, too, have extracted good from the very troubles of life. They have refused to be conquered and enslaved by them. They have made evils the serfs of life, and forced them to render service.

Fanny Crosby, who became blind at six weeks of age, once said: "I am the happiest soul living. If I had not been deprived of my sight, I would never have received so good an education, nor have cultivated so fine a memory, nor have been able to do good to so many people."

"I did not know, till 'neath the rod
I passed, how sore I needed God;
In sorrow's night, lo, like a star
I saw His love shine from afar."

You can extract the concealed lesson of physical evil, and make that lesson yours. Discouragement, disappointment, and even failure may be used by you in such a way you make them assist in personal development, spiritual progress, and growth of character. Think of John Bunyan and his years in prison; think of John Knox and all the opposition he had to his preaching; think of Martin Luther and his unnum-

bered enemies; think of the writer of our text, himself —the struggles, trials, and physical anguish he had during all of his Christian experience. Think even of Jesus Christ and the Cross!

All things yours? Yes, the very experience men call death is yours—death as well as life—if you can understand that it is not death, that life is, and life does not die! Paul undoubtedly looked on the sword or axe of the Roman executioner as the instrument which, by one sharp blow, was to burst his fetters. The sword was his. Such was his understanding heart, such was his boundless possessive spirit. But the same belongs to all who have faith to make it their own. You do not belong to death; death rightly belongs to you! It will be yours, if you make it your own; for no real harm can come to the good. Indeed, they are not dead—the good who have put aside their mortal garments; they have only entered more completely into the abundant life. "Blessed be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body from whom no man escapeth," wrote St. Francis, as worn out with physical toil and suffering, he drew near his end. "Blessed are they who are found walking by Thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm." Death opens the door of new and blessed experiences for every Christian.

All things are yours, if you are Christ's and Christ is yours, for you then have the understanding mind and the boundless possessive spirit of Jesus, the Master!

II

RITUALISM OR RIGHTEOUSNESS?

"They themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled."—JOHN 18:28.

RELIGION and Christianity are not the same thing. One knows that as a historical fact. But the terms are so often used interchangeably that we sometimes think of them as synonymous. There are many religions; there is only one Christianity. It is possible for an individual to be most fervently religious, yet unchristian, or even anti-Christian in his life. The devotional religious spirit does not belong alone to Christianity. A man can deny in every way the principles of the Nazarene, and yet be fervently, zealously religious in his life. The woman who throws her baby in the Ganges because of her religion is an unanswerable argument for the fact that a fervent religious spirit need not be Christian in its nature. The Mohammedan missionary is characterized by an intensely zealous spirit, yet he is one of the great problems which Christianity must face. The Indian who prays for hours is a rebuke to the indifferent believer in Christ, but the prayer of the Indian may not touch the spirit of Jesus. Thousands of Christian missionaries are working day and night because they are conscious of the fact that Christianity is the only religion

which will permanently satisfy. As they work, they have to deal with other religions, religions of all kinds, and of varying worth.

All of this we know. We have probably not considered it with all the seriousness we ought, but we are cognizant of the facts in a general way. What we have not considered, or at least that to which we have only slightly given our attention, is the fact that it is possible for one in a Christian community to be very religious yet not really a Christian. Indeed, it is possible for one to be a member of a Christian church, and yet, while markedly religious, possess little of the spirit of Christianity. It is well for us to consider most seriously this fact. It is tragic, but true, that one can belong to a Christian church, be very religious, and yet not be a Christian in character.

It is my desire that we approach this matter from three different angles. As we do so, we will be able clearly to see the marked distinction between mere religion and Christianity. The contrast will be evident, if we approach the discussion with fairmindedness. Let us, then, consider the contrast between ritualism and righteousness. Righteousness is at the heart of Christianity.

I

At the very outset it should be observed that Christianity does not forbid ritualism. It should be emphasized that ritualism is not an evil in itself. A beautiful ritual may be of untold value in nurturing high and idealistic purposes. The Christian Church from its

very inception has used ritualism. Two great branches of the Church today throughout their entire organization most effectively use ritualism. Without any ritual whatsoever any church is bare, too bare. Too much of good passes through the eye gate for any religious group to abandon so much that is positively helpful.

But there is danger, imminent danger, when any church or any religious group makes ritualism the matter of supreme importance. With many people, moreover, ritualism all too quickly becomes a substitute for real religion. The outward forms and ceremonies are so stressed that they come to be considered of vital significance within themselves. These people have confused values, misplaced emphasis, and thus lose that which is of everlasting import. Christianity is a religion of the heart. It consists of an inward experience. Religion at its best, even before Christianity, was increasingly just this. As religion has developed, more and more its emphasis has been just here. When we, therefore, emphasize the forms and rites of religion by excluding or even by minimizing the heart experience, we are at least not progressive. We regress. We may even be opposing the best in religion. We certainly lose that which is of most worth.

II

Yet, the history of religion pathetically reveals to us unnumbered illustrations of how ritualism has often been substituted for real religion. Ritualism has taken the place of an inner state of heart, a quality of correct

life. Ceremony has been emphasized to the very exclusion of a righteous attitude and a worthy inward spirit.

The Hebrews made this very mistake over and over again. They were faithful to their ritualistic duties. As a matter of fact, they seemed to have increased the numbers of these rites and ceremonies, but all through their national and individual life they forgot where the chief emphasis should have been placed. More than once some prophet had to remind them that to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. Even a king was perfectly willing to go to an extreme in performing the ceremonial rites, but he was not so sensitive to the inner voice which asks for obedience.

In the day of Amos we see an open clash between the priestly idea and the deeper note of religion. There was no question about the devotion of the people to the ceremonies, rites, and rituals. But Amos stood before them and vehemently denounced their acts, saying they had no real religion. Hear him as he boldly cries: "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name; and they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god" (Amos 2:6-8).

He is as clear as he is positive in his denunciation. He knows they have kept the ritualistic service. But this is just the reason for added condemnation. "Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings; for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God" (Amos 4:4, 5). But all this is mockery when the life is so contradictory of real goodness, when right social relationships—right relationships with one's fellows—have been cast aside. Righteousness is far more important than ritual. Righteousness, says Amos, is real religion.

In a later day, Micah brings the same kind of denunciation of mere ritualism. He sees that it has been made such a substitute for religion that he wants to sweep it all aside—at least that which has been in the sacrifice of burnt offerings. He cries out: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). He is summarizing the inner message of both the minor and major prophets, all of whom had been seeking to interpret religion in terms of right living. The work of all these men was so necessary, simply because ritualism had been made the important feature of religion.

But they did not save the people from this grievous error, for when Jesus came, ritualism was in the saddle. Ritualism, not righteousness of life, was the dominant

characteristic of most of these churchmen. That is the reason Jesus kept insistently calling these people back to the fundamentals. He penetrated their outward life. He saw through it all. He knew its mistakes. He said, "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law." All the beatitudes indicated that religion was to be put inside the heart. Then it would portray itself outwardly in the right kind of character.

But Jesus did not convince the people. Those who were strictest in their observance of ritualism demanded and brought about His death. When Jesus was opposed, it was by religious men. He was condemned by religious men; brought to judgment by religious men. Religious men finally brought about the crucifixion of Jesus.

Even while they were trying to remain loyal to their religious customs, they brought Jesus to the hall of judgment. While bringing Him there they still thought of their ceremonial rites. They would not go in lest they should be defiled. Then they could not eat the Passover. Eating the Passover was a necessary religious rite. Thus even while they were true to a religious custom they crucified Jesus. This is the paramount illustration that one can be strictly religious and yet be anti-Christian.

III

Centuries have passed; but we have not as yet learned the vital meaning of this lesson. We do not see clearly, as we must, the contrast between mere

ritualism and righteousness, between ceremonialism and Christianity. How many churches there are which stress outward traditionalism so much it becomes a substitute for the right kind of living! Strange as it may sound, this is the very trouble with much ecclesiasticism. Very few have so clearly and forcibly pointed this out as has H. R. L. Sheppard, of the Anglican Church. He says, " I fear that if our Lord were to come again, He would be compelled to acknowledge that institutional religion has corrected many of His values and forgotten many besides."

Referring to our popular traditionalism, Sheppard continues: "At the moment, if a priest of the Church of England gives the holy communion to a devout follower of Jesus Christ who is not of his own persuasion, he is in effect told by authority that while he has doubtless performed a Christian action, he has committed a kind of ecclesiastical foul which must not be done again. Can this spirit be attributed to Jesus Christ, or is it that we have come to care more for the prestige of our own church and the niceties of church order than for the Spirit of our Lord Himself? "

I listened to a man answer some questions over the radio a few nights ago. He was representing a great church. Some one asked him if he thought it was necessary for one to go through a certain rite before he could have a part in a service of the church, naming one of the services in which most Christian churches engage. The speaker dodged the questioner's real problem. But he did say this: "All churches are agreed that some rite is a prerequisite before one

takes part in this service." Yet, the Quakers have practically no ritual. Many feel they have gone to an extreme. Let that, however, pass for the present. There they are; and they are among the best Christians on the top side of this earth. Shall we exclude them from the benefits of the Church because of their ideas about rites and ceremonies?

Suppose President Hoover, who is a Quaker, were in our congregation. Let us, also, suppose that he wanted to partake of the Lord's Supper. Remember that he is a member of a Christian church, though he has not gone through the ritual of Methodism. Do you suppose he would be refused? If he were refused, how would he feel? More important than that, what would the majority of Christians in the world think about it? The question is a serious one. It is desired that we think this issue straight through. Christianity is not ritualism; it does not matter whose or what that ritual may be. At best, ritualism is only symbolism. When, therefore, we allow any ritual to get between any person and Christ, are we not to that extent untrue to Christ?

I want to be thoroughly understood. Any person has a right to his own interpretation of Christianity. One also has a perfect right to the kind of ritual or ceremony which is desired. But this is what so many of us are objecting to, namely, that all of us do not have the same right. The approach to God is not dependent on the institutionalism or ritualism of any church. As a matter of fact, it is not dependent on the ritualism of all the churches in the world. When

we say it is, we have placed ritualism above the inner experience of Christianity. Certainly the individual must have the right to worship as seems best to him and to appeal to God over the decisions of the mass of his fellow-men, if there is such a thing as religious freedom—"one of the most precious achievements of the higher ethical religions."

Let us not talk so much about Christian unity until we are able to place the chief emphasis on the vital inner experience. Jesus said: "You must be born again." About this He spoke clearly, plainly, uncompromisingly. There is an inner imperative here. But Jesus did not so emphasize any outward rituals or symbols.

Yet many people seem more devoted to certain forms of service than they do to the spiritual characteristics of Jesus. Some years ago I knew this to be vividly illustrated. Two friends visited a certain cathedral in a distant state. They were rather reverent, and of course wanted to be observant of all customs. Something, however, seems to have gone wrong, something in regard to the ceremonial customs of the place, for one of the devotees came up and displayed burning anger. One would have thought courtesy and kindness and Christlike thoughtfulness would have been more important than a rigid observance of some minor traditionalism. But it did not seem to be. Yet, surely he who keeps his temper is nearer Christian than he who observes a minor act of ceremonialism or symbolism, and loses his temper! At least, that is what Jesus indicated.

There is, however, one other phase of the whole matter. It is even more practical, at least for many people. It is just this: When we have gone through our ritual or ceremony, we have not discharged our religious duty; we do not thereby become Christian. Going through all the rituals, rites, and ceremonies in the world will not make anybody Christian. This has been suggested in the preceding incident.

One is eager for all of us to realize how far-reaching the truth is. Symbolism, ceremonialism, scrupulous traditionalism—none of these constitute Christianity, for it "is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." What does that mean? Simply that it is a certain quality of life. It is the life of Christ. Purified, even beautified though it may be, any form or rite can never take the place of Christianity. As a matter of fact, though ritualism is all the religion some people have, it is not, and never can be the religion of Jesus. There is no magic in that!

The greatest of all the symbols in Christianity, the Cross, is worthless and useless unless one experiences it in his inner life. Of course, there can be no Christianity without the Cross. But the Cross is not a symbol. It is an experience!

III

CREED OR CHRIST?

"Beware of the scribes. . . . They prey upon the property of widows and offer long unreal prayers."—MARK 12:38, 40 (Moffatt).

NO thoughtful person will sneer at theology. Of course there are some people today who are ridiculing the intellectual systems which seek to define religion and Christianity, but they are lacking in depth of life. Any professing Christian who has no serious consideration for the great affirmations of our religious forefathers is unaware of the significance of his religion, and unappreciative of the progress made by those who have definitely aided the cause of Christianity. Let no one who wishes to live deeply in the real spirit of Christianity think that theology and creeds are worthless. Theology has been part of the backbone of religion. Every intelligent Christian knows that. Let us, therefore, clearly understand in what is to follow there is no lack of appreciation for genuine creedal affirmations in Christianity.

Having in all fairness said this, one should be able the more easily to note the evident discrimination which all of us may witness between a creed and a life. As a matter of fact, this is a distinction of which we have had to be witnesses. Christianity would be

far better off today had it not been for some of the occurrences which have tragically affected Christian living, occurrences caused by an over-emphasis of creeds.

I

Creeds can be over-emphasized. They have been. They can be emphasized so much that proper stress is not put upon deed. There are people who have been unable to accept certain statements of theology, yet who have lived very fine lives. Possibly many of these people ought to have reached a more satisfactory mental interpretation. But the evidence is that in many instances the keenest thinkers have been among those who in honesty refused to force their minds to accept some things as facts which they were unable to see as true. Often they have been men and women who have sought earnestly to live up to the best they knew. They have unmistakably demonstrated that often

> *"There lives more faith in honest doubt,*
> *. . . than in half the creeds."*

Surely intellectual integrity and moral idealism are far more desirable than mere mental conformity in religious beliefs, even though these beliefs are set forth, by supposed authorities, as the *sine qua non* of Christianity.

It is well, moreover, to keep in mind the fact that scholars have pointed out that the great creeds contain doctrines which were not believed by some of

the New Testament writers. Some of the contents of the creeds are clearly irrelevant to the question of loyalty to Christ. The Church which realizes the significance of this fact will insist upon the preëminent importance of a life of deeds, when this is genuine and sincere, as a test for admission to "its privileges."

Surely we ought to put first things first. Sustaining the right relationship to the living Christ is the matter of primary importance. This is Christianity. Whatever interpretation we may give to our experience is necessarily secondary. Some kind of harm is a certain consequence of an over-emphasis on intellectualism. A confusion of values in religion always results in tragedy. Certainly in a day when the right to think is being increasingly insisted upon, even by the individual who has not been trained in the way of the scholars, we shall not gain religious harmony by demanding the kind of conformity which comes from exact agreement on creeds. As a matter of plain fact, Christianity is not a problem in philosophy to be solved or a lesson in science to be learned; it is a spirit to be lived. Proper respect for the intellect is, of course, in order. But the very esteem itself which Christianity places on the mind grows out of the confidence that God honours sincere thinking. Spiritual unity is possible because Christianity always stresses, as its indispensable essential, a life like that of Christ.

If some one thinks that all of this is new, or even possibly reactionary, let him recall the familiar words of John Wesley, who cries out in his *Journal:* "My

soul is sick of this sublime divinity. Let me think and speak as a little child! Let my religion be plain, artless, simple! Meekness, temperance, patience, faith, and love be my highest gifts; and let the highest words wherein I teach them be those I learn from the Book of God." In another place he asks: "What is faith? Not an opinion, nor any number of opinions, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness." Again he says: "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes the wig off and shakes the powder in my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible." Such a succinct summary needs no comment.

As regrettable as it is, there are those who are demonstratively orthodox, fervently earnest about their beliefs, but who "show the bad side of their good disposition" even when one disagrees with their theology. Well, those people, even if they are correct in their creeds, are not spiritually akin to the One they call Master. They are unchristian in their inmost lives. I say "inmost," because the seat of temper is within. Personal attitudes must be Christlike if one is really Christian. Surely courtesy, kindness, and regard for others, even when these are manifest without correct theology, are to be preferred to correct theology without them!

A more tragic phase of all this misplaced emphasis, however, is the failure to give sound morals and strict

ethics their proper place. Christian ethics must have the place of preëminence, if Christ is given first place. Jesus has plainly told us that God cares how man lives, and He cares intensely. He is greatly concerned with the standards of man's life. The principles by which one is guided are of supreme importance.

Yet, as all of us know, there have been those who, while rigidly insistent upon correct creeds, have forgotten the weightier matters of ethical living. Some people are as orthodox as the devils about whom St. James wrote, and just about as unprincipled in their business or profession. "The devils," says St. James, "believe and tremble." But they are still devils. One can actually have a creed that is good and true, be faithful in defending it with argument, and yet be unchristian in his very character. It is possible for one to be fervently religious while he has no moral principle by which to guide his life. A man may hold right creeds and profess correct theology, and at the same time be dishonest in his business or unscrupulous in his professional relationships. There are churchmen who pray to God in perfectly orthodox fashion on Sunday, and then prey on the poor, the orphans, and widows the rest of the week. Ethics and morals may be repudiated by one who is soundly orthodox in his theology.

An essayist has written a penetrating interpretation of George Eliot's *Janet's Repentance*. He clearly points out how unchristian were some of the most religious characters in the book: Mr. Dempster, who

was a very religious man, yet a drunkard; Mr. Budd, who was also a very religious man, in fact, a warden at the Parish Church, yet "his scandalous life" had long furnished his more moral neighbours with an after-dinner joke; and Mrs. Linnet, who was also a very religious woman—and a gossip! It is a tragically true observation which must often be made in life. A fervent emotionalism and a sound orthodoxy are characteristics of many people who have little, if any, genuine Christianity.

It is a sickening fact, which all true Christians must confess, that some who are very active in religion call their devotion Christianity, and yet are unethical in their social relationships. A friend tells of a certain man who had to confess that he had spoken falsely about some matters. Others have related similar incidents about the same individual. It seems to be a habit with him. Yet this man has been most active in harshly condemning people for being unwilling to accept his theology. Strange inconsistency! Markedly religious, yet thoroughly unchristian! The words of Thomas à Kempis are certainly apropos: "He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh is delivered from a multitude of opinions. What doth it profit thee to dispute learnedly of the Trinity, if thou be wanting in humility, and so be displeasing to the Trinity?" Christianity is characterized by the ethics of divine love. If a man lives the Christ life, he must be genuinely honest, true, and good. If one is a Christian, and not merely religious, he must be morally sound and ethically right. Christianity is the per-

fectly happy marriage of strict morality and heartfelt religion.

One does not even have to understand creeds and theology in order to live like Christ. Some of the most Christlike people, all of us know, have never been trained in the science of religious criticism. Dr. Arthur Gossip rightly insists there are people who are untheologically-minded. The most brilliant in other fields of learning quite readily admit this fact. Certainly many know what it is not to be mathematically-minded, or Latin-minded! If some of us do not understand, our former college professors do! But, whatever worry one may have because of this, the fact that one is not theologically-minded is not one to be greatly disturbed about. As a matter of fact, trying to explain Christianity by theology is not always necessary. Sometimes it is not even helpful. There are many religious matters which would carry far more meaning if attempts were not made to explain them.

It is not right to insist that all people cultivate the power scientifically to analyze theology or the message it seeks to convey. Of course it is perfectly all right if one is thoroughly able to do this. But the people who are able ought to remember that everybody does not have the same ability! They should therefore excuse those of us who are unable to engage in the same kind of mental dexterity.

T. R. Glover has reminded us that in order to explain Jesus, His friends and contemporaries spoke of Him as the Logos, the Sacrifice, Christ our Pass-

over, the Messiah, and the like. Then he adds: "Of these terms, not one is intelligible without a commentary. To ordinary people Jesus is at once intelligible, far more than the explanations of Him."

Because this is true, we ought not to "block the road to Christ" by insisting on the acceptance of certain intellectual interpretations as prerequisites for the "acceptance of Christ." As Dr. Moffatt translates Acts 15:19: "We ought not to put fresh difficulties in the way of those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles." It seems certain that the churches will more closely approximate the ideal of Jesus, and, therefore, more nearly please Him, when they have as few intellectual requirements for membership as they possibly can, with wise discretion. Love of Christ is undeniably the one fundamental requisite. This is essential Christianity. "Lovest thou me?" is the question Jesus would ask of every person who expresses a desire to follow Him.

A contemporary of Lincoln has reported statements made by the great President in regard to religion. She relates that Lincoln said if he read aright, it was a spirit of life that Jesus stressed. Then he went on to add that the fundamental truths reported in the Gospels as from the lips of Jesus, and that he first heard from the lips of his mother, were settled and fixed moral precepts with him. "I have dismissed the debatable wrangles that once perplexed me with the distractions that stirred up but never absolutely settled anything. I have tossed them aside with the doubtful differences which divide denominations. I

have ceased to follow such discussions or to be interested in them. I cannot without mental reservation assent to long and complicated creeds and catechisms. If the Church would ask simply for assent to the Saviour's statement of the substance of the law, 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,'—that church would I gladly unite with." Surely the Church is wise today when it places its chief emphasis just here!

"If ever I dig out
Into the upper air—
Through dogma, creed and doubt—
I'll surely find Him there."

Men and women really hunger for Christ. They cannot be satisfied without Him. When they see Him, most people do reverence Him. In a diary of a trip made to Paris in 1848, Palgrave tells of the wrecking of the Tuileries. He relates how the mob suddenly broke into the chapel, and then faced the picture of Christ over the altar. Someone cried out that everybody should bare his head. The crowd at once did so, and knelt down, while the picture was carried out into a neighbouring church. There was the utmost silence; one could have "heard a fly buzz. . . . Then the suspended wave of destruction rolled on."

In their most serious moments people do give Christ a high place in their thinking. One really believes that most people can be won to give Him

right of way in their lives. But only individuals, persons who portray His attitude, His spirit, His character can persuade them to do this. For this reason John Oxenham says:

> *"Christ is more than all the creeds,*
> *And His full life of gentle deeds*
> *Shall all the creeds outlive."*

IV

SECTARIANISM OR CHRISTIANITY?

"Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, I beg of you all to drop these party-cries."—I CORINTHIANS 1:10 (Moffatt).

IN spite of the fact that at present it seems we must use various denominations as agencies in doing the work of Christianity, it may be reasonably said there certainly can be no necessity for more than two hundred denominations, as we now have. Even when the present apparent necessity for these organizations is granted, all of us well know that we have become needlessly, hurtfully divided. There are not two hundred vital issues in Christianity. Denominationalism itself presents a danger, as well as a serious problem.

I

Sectarianism, however, is not a problem simply; it is an evil. It is contradictory of the very spirit of Jesus Christ. Undue zeal for and devotion to a particular party or sect cannot be harmonious with Christianity. When St. Paul writes, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same

judgment," he is rebuking the spirit of division which manifests itself in party cries and group interests. St. Paul sees the fearful danger of this. He realizes that it may lead to disastrous results for Christianity. Today, the danger is greatly exaggerated, there being so many more divisions and the various groups being rigidly organized. The more rigidly organized any sect becomes, the more it develops group loyalty.

The spirit of undue devotion to a religious party or sect means that those influenced by this spirit will to some degree be forgetful of others. Of course this is a serious charge. For to the extent one becomes forgetful of the interests of others, to that degree he is unchristian. Christ makes one consider other people, think of their interests, and live for their good.

The more Christian any person is, the broader his interests are. He seeks helpful points of contact with all groups. The Christian's life is deep as human need; his interests are inclusive as mankind; and his desires are always for the positive good of all people. There is no self-centred spirit in Christianity. The Christian seeketh not his own, is not easily provoked, suffers long, and is kind, because he is always considering the good of others. The Christian spirit takes in the whole world, every person in it. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." No one is excluded; no one is forgotten. He who has this spirit of the Deity has the same kind of regard for and concern about others. He cannot overlook them or forget them.

Yet we do know that an individual can be so

devoted to his little group that he becomes almost entirely selfish. A churchman can be so centred in one organization that he does not much care what becomes of the others. Indeed, it is possible for people to be so interested in their own group that they feel good when others do not succeed. You will remember the old story about the Methodist preacher, who, upon being asked how his church was getting on, replied: "Everything seems to be 'going to the dogs.' The building itself is about to fall down. It leaks every time we have a shower of rain, and the people refuse to repair the roof. All the finances are behind; and nobody seems to care at all. It is difficult to imagine that things could be worse." Then, looking up with a smile, he joyfully exclaimed: "And yet, I am glad to say the Episcopalians are a whole lot worse off." Of course, everybody does not talk just that plainly! Some people think more than they say! But that kind of spirit, when it becomes serious, is not Christian.

If narrow group loyalty is over-emphasized, the inevitable result is that there is less concern for the larger group, the greater cause—the Kingdom of God. The really important interest is excluded by some petty loyalty. That is tragic. Inevitably one becomes little and narrow, and then interprets all things in terms of littleness and narrowness.

"How pitiful are little folk—
They seem so very small;
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational."

What a searching summary! How suggestive! When one lives in the greatness of God's vast universe he cannot be little or narrow. I dare say no real astronomer can be a narrow sectarian! Any one who realizes the vastness of God's universe and thus comes to see the unlimited breadth of Divine interest cannot be little or narrow.

Yet it seems that this exclusive spirit has nearly always been manifest in religious groups. One reason the Pharisees rejected Jesus was that He was too broad for them. He went out and fellowshipped with those who were outcasts, those who were not members of their pharisaical group. Today one can be filled with pharisaical pride for one's religious group, and thus, though he lives in a Christian Church, never know the great spirit of Christianity. But he cannot do this and remain a Christian. No mere sectarian can be genuinely Christian. Christianity cares for all people.

II

If, however, one is influenced long enough by a spirit of group selfishness, it will tighten its grip on him until he is not merely forgetful of others; he may exclude them from the household of faith. Christianity suffers greatly when there are professed representatives who insist that those who do not belong to their party are not Christian. The people who are so attached to one group have nothing to do with any other. They do not possess the spirit of Jesus. Yet there are these people. They present

visible evidence for the fact that it is possible for one to live in a Christian community, to worship in a Christian church, and still remain in the dark, narrow cell of an unchristian life. Indeed, as the lives of some people show, a man may defend his own interpretation of religion to the last ditch, even die defending it, and yet not live the character of Jesus Christ. "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

It is interesting to note, as W. E. Garrison has pointed out, that every sect claims to be nearer to Christ and more loyal to Him than any other. The climax of a certain denominational apologetic is that this "church represents Christianity as Christ conceived it." Another book asks why a member of the church concerned should not join any other church, and finds the answer to the question in the assertion that this church is "the old original Church of Christ." Still another writer says this type of religion "is simply a return from the corrupted doctrines of orthodox Christianity to the pure religion of the New Testament,"—which obviously means the pure religion of Jesus Christ. Another group say that they go back of Jesus to His forerunner. Still another say they are certain they have the New Testament way of living. It has been asserted that theirs is *the* Christian Church. . . . Well, one wishes he did not have to be so very inclusive in pointing out the spirit of exclusiveness; but attention to what some representatives are saying suggests how all groups at times have apparently been guilty.

Of course this is not all humour. One wishes it were! The serious consideration is that this exclusiveness causes many people to develop a marked partisanship which is not akin to the universal spirit of Jesus Christ. Now, my point is this: When such a spirit develops to the extent any one group begins to feel and say that it is a full and final edition of Christianity, a tragedy has been enacted.

One is reminded of a newsboy rushing out on the street, shouting, "Final! Last Edition!" There will be nothing to come out after this. . . . It is pathetically tragic when people say there can be no closer approximation to the real spirit of Christ—none closer than what we have now. Especially is this true when people who talk this way are so exclusive in their spirit and attitude.

In contrast to this is the attitude of many who have been vitally associated with these various groups. It is refreshing to think how different some of them have felt. Recall the time Charles Wesley's favourite and gifted son joined a church of a faith different from that to which any of his family belonged. The father was grievously distressed. Then John wrote his brother, "I doubt not that Sarah and you are in trouble because Samuel has 'changed his religion.' Nay, he has changed his opinion and mode of worship, but not his religion; it is quite another thing. What, then, is religion? It is happiness in God or in the knowledge and love of God. It is faith working by love, producing righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In other words, it is a heart

and life devoted to God. Either he has this religion, or he has not; if he has, he will not finally perish."

It is to be regretted that the spirit portrayed by this letter is not typical of all church people today. All too often the opposite is in evidence. There have been many instances akin to the one presented by Stanley Jones in his book, *Christ at the Round Table.* He relates how a lady missionary asked a clergyman of a certain church if he would let Christ preach in his pulpit.

"Certainly," was the reply.

"Would you allow Him to administer Communion?"

The clergyman hesitated. "I am afraid I couldn't," he replied, "for He wasn't ordained."

This, Jones poignantly says, is an exclusion of Christ.

III

Beyond this let one think of what loss of energy and effort we experience when people place group loyalty above Christ loyalty—energy and effort which could be spent for the great interests of Christianity. It has been observed that the most successful demonstration, made by the Church of England in recent years, was its admirably organized protest against the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church. Surely "it is pathetic to think of the enthusiasm which was then aroused, and then compare it with the feeble response that would ensue were the churches to summon their members to

protest, for instance, against war or some social wrong."

The cause of missions will reveal how all sects are involved. Surely it is a shame to divide over non-essentials, while the world with outstretched arms pleads for something—it knows not what—something which Christ alone can give. Even while the world does not ask for anything different from what it has, its needs cry out for a response which is adequate and complete. Think of the situation in India. A recent volume on India has stirred many to a new realization of how deeply that country needs something to save her. With a mental slavery which causes parents to marry their daughters before they reach their teens, these people unfeelingly bring physical and mental horrors to their children. Sometimes men fifty years of age marry girls ten and eleven. Our attention has been called to some cases which are representative of a host of others. They suggest gruesome, almost unbelievable facts. . . . There are nearly twenty-seven million widows in India who, with life already ruined, can never even hope for the partial support which married life gives.

Now, my point is just this: While the needs for a Christ who can redeem, civilize, and Christianize are so tragically evident, it is a dishonour to Him whom we call Master for us to so emphasize our sectarian differences that the weightier matters of Christlike service are either forgotten or minimized. It is not merely a shame on Christianity; we handicap our

intellectually. And others are embarrassed for them even while they are not for themselves.

People who are so unenlightened that their prejudices make impossible sound judgment clearly reveal what they are and how narrowly they live, whenever they say or do anything. The jeering crowds who unmercifully assailed Wendell Phillips did just this. That passionate devotee of emancipation was bitterly criticized, harshly condemned, and violently opposed. More than once when he was speaking he was greeted with a deluge of rocks, decayed vegetables, and spoiled eggs. Of course this was a vehement denunciation of both Wendell Phillips and the cause he represented. But think how the biased partisans were portraying their ignorance and their prejudice!

II

This naturally suggests a consideration of certain necessary attitudes and relationships, if one's life is what it ought to be. One may fail to have a proper estimate of musical art, and yet not have anything essentially wrong with his character. It is even possible to be so ignorant and prejudiced that one deserves more pity and sympathetic help than he does condemnation. There are, however, some matters on which we dare not pass adverse judgment if we are wise; indeed, if we are what we ought to be we cannot pass hostile criticism on them. To do so is to incur danger to one's very soul.

The individuals who sneer at the thought of idealism do not live deeply. It is not a sign of intellectual

superiority, it is rather an indication of ethical shallowness to laugh at the idea of personal integrity. Every man does not have his price, but the man who insists that this false proverb is true has his. Those who contend that one who is pinched by poverty will surrender his ideals tell us what they will do, not what every person will do. They forget such men as Sir Walter Scott, who assumed the debts of the company printing his books, when he was not legally responsible. They forget such men as Mozart, who, when he was told by his publisher, "Write in a more easy, popular style, or I will not print a note or give you a cent," replied, "Then, my good sir, I have only to resign myself and die of hunger."

Those who impetuously deny the reality and even the possibility of genuine goodness are over-anxious to tell the public about themselves. Either they do not want or they do not have uncompromising ethical and moral standards. Some of these moral weaklings are shrewd enough to unload their sordid literary wares on the public. But the fact that their books are widely sold, and therefore remunerative, does not give them worth. Others join in the chorus of the rabble, as these unthinking ones hastily render their superficial criticism. But the fact that the verdict they render is popular does not make it right. A few years ago, in one of our cities, a person falsely accused a prominent citizen of certain social improprieties, with the idea of extracting a large sum of money. The excited discussions which followed the newspaper announcements were more than just heated com-

ments; they were revelations of character. Those who vehemently insisted that, under the circumstances, moral integrity would be impossible, unwittingly bared their souls to the public gaze. The established innocence of the citizen only served to emphasize the erroneous sentence of the self-appointed judges.

Unbridled criticism and condemnation are always fraught with danger. It does not pay to be thoughtlessly harsh toward others. A parable which has been given us artfully suggests exactly what happens with some people. The story is about a man who was walking down a certain street in company with a friend. He began talking most uncharitably about an individual who was moving rapidly toward them. But he suddenly stopped when he discovered that he was walking in direct line with a large mirror jutting out from a jeweller's shop.

Yet there are some who still insist that there are no men and women of righteous character. They say that a man cannot live as he ought. It is hypocrisy to try. Thus do these people tell what they are doing and how they fail. Their words reflect their own character.

It is also true that there are people who think they are condemning the best magazines, papers, and books, when they refuse to read them, but instead read worthless trash which is put out simply for money-making purposes. They are really passing their judgment on themselves, on their inability to appreciate the best, on their ignorance of good litera-

ture, and on their lack of personal interest in the highest and finest thoughts of mankind.

There are individuals who, by not reading it, indicate they think the Book of all books, the Bible, is worthless or useless. They forget that by their very act they are reflecting on themselves. That Book has stood the test of the centuries. Its strong spirit has given life to all great literature. Its ageless message has cheered and inspired the souls of countless thousands. Its moral and ethical truths have saved nations from disaster. That Book has been a veritable Gibraltar, against which have impotently swept the surging tides of senseless criticism. One does not judge the Bible when he counts it worthless by refusing to imbibe its living spirit; that Book judges such a person, and its judgment is one to be feared!

If some one suggests he cannot accept the science of the Old Testament, he confesses his ignorance of the purpose of the Book. If one says there is so much wrong with the Bible it must undergo some critical analysis before he can make use of it, he is acknowledging to everybody he has been asleep for fifty or sixty years. One recalls what Halford Luccock said about a certain scientist who, a few months ago, insisted that we need a revision of religion today. Said Professor Luccock: "That scientist sounded like a newsboy rushing out on the street, shouting: 'Extra! Extra! General Lee surrenders at Appomatox!'"

Exactly! Some people need to be very careful when they talk; they tell too much about what they

know and do not know in regard to what has been going on. Far worse, however, is the display of their ignorance of spiritual realities, and their lack of appreciation of eternal values.

Some people have little use for prayer. They say that in a day of science and of advanced knowledge prayer is no longer valid or of practical use. These people forget that multitudes have been lifted to the very throne of God by the art of communion. They forget that souls have been purged, cleansed, and made holy by contact with the spirit of God in prayer. They overlook the fact that men and women, while listening to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit in the hour of devotion, have learned what to say, what to do, and how to live. Prayer gives one power because by it one is rightly adjusted to the process of the world. One attains harmony with God.

The idea of prayer as a grab-bag has been rightly relegated to the background and discarded. But just because this is true, the people who dismiss the whole scheme of things involved in prayer act most unwisely, and do this to the peril of their souls. They think that they judge prayer, but prayer judges them. They clearly disclose that they cannot even discriminate between the worthless and the real. Their lack of desire to know and to be led by the Highest is evident.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer."

Faith, in its higher reaches, is not to be scorned. He who laughs at religious faith—not credulity, mark you, but faith—is passing judgment on himself. Faith is exercised by business men; it is necessary in science. It is only reasonable to assume that religious faith is valid; and so it is—real faith. He who necessarily uses faith in every department of life and then scorns it in religion clearly shows that he is prejudiced, biased, and unwilling to be fair. He is markedly inconsistent. He, moreover, rejects a real necessity of life, and thus shows his lack of appreciation of the most important values of life. Thinking that he is judging, he is himself judged.

Of course some people are sneering at what they call the "credulity" of Christians. These cynical individuals think they are highly intelligent because they can laugh at religion, the soul of which is faith. Their ignorance of spiritual realities is astounding. While they talk about Christians superstitiously accepting outgrown theology, all intelligent Christians know that faith is not primarily creedal; it is spiritual.

> *"Think not the faith by which the just shall live*
> *Is a dead creed, a map correct, of heaven. . . .*
> *It is an affirmation and an act*
> *Which makes eternal truth be present fact."*

The true Christian is not gullible; he is the world's most courageous and hopeful pilgrim. He dares to believe the best. He ventures his all; but it is in a Person. He is convinced there is a Being, in char-

acter like Jesus Christ, who is in control of the universe.

III

But there is something even more personally vital than all this. It is something of eternal importance. It is the matter of passing judgment on the world's one Master. There are some persons whom we wrong by judging them as inferior to what they are—characters such as Amos, Hosea, St. John, and St. Paul. It is a serious mistake to express an untrue opinion about these men, one which indicates that they lived inferior lives to what they did. But there is another Person whom the ages have left spotless, holy, perfectly pure. Time has added honour to His worth. The best people in the world have been His friends. Those who have been most intimate with Him have been the noblest people the world has known. The centuries acclaim the greatness of this Man.

A woman once said to Turner, the artist, speaking about one of his pictures: "I never saw anything in nature like you put on your canvas." "But, don't you wish you could?" was the reply of the artist. That was subtle. *Don't you wish you had the artistic sense to see it?* That was what he was asking. Yet, there are many who are standing before Jesus Christ with the same inability to sense goodness, beauty, and truth. They reflect their own lack of kinship with the Master. They indicate their tangled and confused thinking, and reveal their distorted mental grasp.

Any one who passes adverse judgment on Jesus

Christ simply judges himself. He is judged. And the judgment of Jesus Christ is just. It was He who said: "And ye have not God's word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." Let a man be sure that he understands the importance of his attitude, his personal response, his judgment in regard to Jesus. For what one does about Jesus Christ determines character, and *character is destiny.*

VII

LAW OR LOVE?

"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."—JEREMIAH 31:33.

"A new commandment I give unto you. . . . As I have loved you . . . also love one another."—JOHN 13:34.

THE majority of people are really eager to know how to distinguish between right and wrong. Even those who are anxious for the right to be synonymous with their desires are interested to know what the right is. Of course there are people who seem to have no basis for determining what acts should be chosen; apparently they will live as they please. Most individuals, however, have something which resembles a standard for deciding the ethics of their acts.

I

For those who do, there are, after all, only two general courses of procedure. First, it is possible to be guided by law. Certain laws determine what one will do. There are directions regulative of each minor act in life. The other course for one to take is that of control by some dominating principle, or principles. A great inner spirit characterizes one's thinking and one's feeling. Actions will be determined as

they accord with this inner motive or purpose of right. Of course, it must be admitted that the ordinary life is affected by both of these factors, rule and principle; law and inner spirit. But the wise person will increasingly accept one to the exclusion of the other. Let one, therefore, know the worth of each.

Rules and laws which point out the right have some kind of advantage, it is said. The Old Testament legislation is illustrative of the fact. The exactness and even harshness of the law might often trouble one, but at any rate he could tell what to do. There was the law; it was supposed to be exactly right. Let the earnest Hebrew only read or hear, and he could tell what to do. If there were any question about whether an act were wrong, let one look up the regulation for conduct. With exactness almost mathematical it could be discovered.

When one observes the Pharisees of New Testament times, he can see the same kind of advantage, whatever he may think of it. One could almost grade himself on the examination of the law. It might even be a more correct examination, too, than many of our scholastic tests today. Either he had or he had not kept these laws. Either he had or had not broken certain rules. It was the standard of the yard-stick. One was two feet, three inches good; or maybe, if he were a strict Pharisee, two feet, eleven and one-half inches perfect! If this kind of examination is desired, then rules and laws are certainly advantageous.

But that which seems such an asset comes to be really a liability, for the disadvantages of such a basis

for living are unnumbered. Any such method of living inevitably results in sickening disappointment. In the deepest sense of the word, there is nothing satisfactory about it.

Living by a rule-book makes impossible a creative life. Such lock-step living is antagonistic to the development of personality. Such a thing as distinct personality with individual initiative is made impossible. There is a story about a Syrian who, hearing an orchestra play "The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," thought it was the national anthem of the United States, and therefore, out of deference to an American who was present, arose and stood at attention. The Syrian, of course, had no intention at all of being humourous. With him, it was merely a matter of being unfamiliar with the tune. But, when people live religiously by formula, we do get a parade of wooden soldiers. We have a presentation of mechanical religion. And it isn't worth having!

Any one who lives religiously by rules becomes a Pharisee. This is the only possible result of such mechanical living. The Pharisees reached the place where they argued whether it was permissible to eat an egg laid on the Sabbath. There were hundreds of other questions just as silly which they also seriously considered. One is reminded of the way so many who term themselves Christians talk now. They want to know about every little act—is this right or wrong? They are Pharisees, not Christians. Every possible deed must be labeled "R" or "W," "R" meaning right and "W" meaning wrong. There are so many

deeds we can't write out the full word! So we use some shorthand system such as stores use in marking the wholesale price of goods.

I remember an experience some years ago, which is markedly typical. Following a revival, a girl came up to the preacher and asked, now that she had become a Christian, if a certain form of pleasure in which she had been indulging was wrong. I suppose the preacher was a sort of religious judge who could separate in a moment all wrong from all right acts! . . . It seems this is a power to be coveted; the same kind of question is asked so much.

The writer was in a university community for a series of religious services some time ago. Before he hardly had a chance to preach, an immediate verdict was requested on whether a certain form of pleasure was wrong. The student body had clashed with the administration on the matter. He was asked to speak with authority on the issue! Was the matter right or wrong?

Well, whatever else may be stated, one can certainly speak with authority long enough to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that such living takes all the joy out of life. One is simply part of a great mechanical system. One is driven like a slave or an animal. There is only one course to take. The law drives the individual on. Though his reference is to another matter, the picture G. A. Studdert Kennedy gives of many people being driven, like cows to market, is applicable in this connection. All of us have seen cattle, staggering on in a herd, to some

destination, often to slaughter. Theirs is a state of muddled stupidity, as they are driven on, being beaten first on one side and then on the other, to keep them in the narrow way. As they always seek to get away from the stick, they always run into it. How vivid a description it is of every person who is trying to be a Christian, and at the same time, is seeking to have his life guided by hard, harsh laws!

The typical Pharisee was an appalling instance of the inadequacy of the kind of religion which is regulated by law. This is true just because the Pharisee was a slave. There was no spontaneity, no enthusiastic eagerness, no happy vivacity in his religion. There was an outward compulsion, but no inward impulsion about his life. He did things because he had to do them, "not because some mighty love possessed him and flooded him and inspired him." Certainly there can be no freedom of spirit when one is controlled by hard and fast laws. If I must forever keep reading a book of rules or thinking about a multiplicity of regulations, I am a slave. No other term so accurately describes my life. A life of bondage makes happiness impossible.

The Pharisee did lose all joy in religion. Into the temple he went and prayed: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." But he was not happy. And in the last analysis, when most serious, he realized that something was wrong. Paul was among the strictest of the group. But he was bitterly

conscious of failure. The law had failed Paul. Paul had failed in using the law. Rules for religious living always fail.

II

But there is a satisfactory way to determine what is right, and thus, how rightly to live. It is the Christian way of life; it is the direction of principle. This is the only reasonable basis for determining right conduct. Rules can only make Pharisees; principles make Christians.

Christianity is a religion of principles, because it always thinks in terms of personality. According to Jesus, personality is the greatest thing in the world. It is of supreme importance. People count for more than all things that are material. But what makes a personality is self-consciousness and self-will.

For this reason we need to know that when we are dealing with people, we are not dealing with machines or animals. People can think and reason; they have minds. It is not necessary for them to be mechanically forced in any way of life. In his best moments man can think; he can think of what is best. He has the capacity to pass judgment; he is able to discriminate; he can choose with wisdom.

And God has not left him without a witness in his heart. God has written His law in the heart of men, women, and children. One is not living as a human being when he fails to use this inner witness. His authority is spiritual; it resides on the inside. His true basis for choice is always spiritual.

Henry Septimus Sutton speaks representatively when he says:

> *"I have a little inward light, which still*
> *All tenderly I keep, and ever will.*
> *I think it never wholly dies away;*
> *But oft it seems as if it could not stay,*
> *And I do strive to keep it if I may."*

Man lives closest to God when his life is guided, not by external regulation, but by the inner spirit of the Deity Himself. God's Spirit does speak to every person. As eagerly as one listens, so, to that extent, can one clearly hear.

After all, this is the easiest way to determine how to live. Even the Pharisees had a world of trouble in explaining and interpreting their laws. Guidance was not nearly so simple as it seemed to be. It never is when law governs the life. The sensitive spiritual ear of the earnest Christian is decidedly preferable to the enslaving devotion to harsh external law.

III

Jesus has given us the Christian principle in unmistakable terms. It was He who said: "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." The highest interest of personality is perfection. This, therefore, is the standard of my life when I am really Christian: the perfection of personality. It is, moreover, the perfection of every personality. "As I have loved you, love one another." We are to have, as our heart's desire, the complete development of every personality. For the employer, this means that he will

organize his business in such a way that persons will be put above things, that men rather than dollars will be given first consideration. Likewise, every labourer must think of the good of people in everything he does. So, too, the professional man must first of all think of the highest good of all the persons involved in the service he renders.

The real question which any one has to settle is not whether each possible act is right or wrong. It is rather, first of all, what kind of personality is he going to have. The one major question I have to settle is: Do I want to live the finest possible life? If I do, then I am to seek to learn who has lived the highest. If, once for all time, I decide that the finest personality is that which is most like Jesus Christ, then I have settled the major issue of my life. If the self I intend developing is Christlike, then I have my principle. It is a momentous, gigantic, powerful principle. But I am forever free from legal entanglements. Now my question in regard to each deed or act in life is: Will this act help or hurt? Will it build up or tear down? Will it make me purer or less pure? Nobler or less honourable? More unselfish or less thoughtful of others? Indeed, will my character be more or less like that of Jesus when I engage in this?

Should one say there are some things which are so colourless one might waste time trying to see what effect they would have, that one has by no means caught the principle of Christianity. This statement reveals the fact. A devotion to the development of a

Christlike personality is so powerful it demands eager choices of the very best. This is a characteristic of Christianity. It even makes the Christian discriminate between the good and the best. Jesus always sought the best. The Christ-centred, the Christian-motivated individual will do the same. . . . "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" was the warning of Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees were good, but they were not good enough.

No one can be good enough without love, and no one can really love a cold rule. One can be good in the Christian sense only when genuine love characterizes and impels all he does. It was the love of Jesus for His Father which prompted His acts. His summary of the law for us is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is His principle for us. From childhood Jesus had said, "I must be about my Father's business." That business was the most complete development of every personality. So perfectly did Jesus live on this principle of the development of every personality, the divine testimony was: "In him am I well pleased."

When one learns the real meaning of Christianity, he knows that it is a frame of mind, an attitude, a spirit. When one's inner spirit is Christian, the life portrays that spirit. There are deeds, acts to indicate the quality of the inner life. But Christianity begins inside the mind and heart; and it forever resides there.

Christianity is the spirit of Christ. The impelling spirit of Jesus Himself pervades one's very being, colours his thinking, and characterizes his activities. This is Christianity—to be controlled by the soul of Jesus. It is for this reason the Christian prays:

"I want a principle within,
Of jealous, godly fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near:
Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake."

No man can do what is wrong if he lives like Christ. No man can hurt another if he so considers the other person's interest that in all of his relationships he is guided by a sincere desire to help him become like Christ.

And so we come to see, as has been noted, that Christians are not given a new code. We do not receive a new set of rules. Christianity is not a legal system. It is a new spirit, a new way of living, a new type of person. To make a world of persons of this type, "to have this spirit prevail would mean the actual presence of the Kingdom of God, because this spirit would produce not only a new inner world, but a new outer world as well."

IV

This is sufficient reason for choosing principle, rather than rule, as the basis for living. Particularly

may this reason be seen when we understand that our morality needs the love of religion. Religion at its best is morality on fire. The devotion of pure passion is to be found only in Christianity.

This experience, moreover, brings freedom from slavery. St. Augustine said: "Love God, and then you may do what you please." One who loves God will not approve of what is wrong. But his life will not be bound by the chains of serfdom. He will do the right because he loves the right. That is freedom. Anything else is slavery.

This inner experience alone brings joy. Only a son can have the experience of happiness. In all the life of Jesus one sees the intimate personal experience of a son with his father. There comes to Jesus the consciousness of sonship, a sonship which is pleasing to His Father. This is the way of Christian happiness.

Any one devoted to Jesus Christ will seek the best both for himself and for everyone else. He will possibly make some mistakes, but he will so seek for the Christlike development of all people that the principle of love will make his life worthy.

". . . he who walks in love may wander far,
But God will bring him where the blessed are."

VIII

WHAT IS MAN?

"What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?"
—Job 7:17.

IT is not difficult for us who live today to join in the question of Job and ask, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?" If the simple but serious-thinking people who lived some twenty-four hundred years ago asked with wonder this question, we who live today, with increased wonder and astonishment, may ask, "What is man, that we should magnify him?"

I

Particularly is it easy for the city-dweller to smile incredulously at the thought that man might be of some real significance, that he might occupy some preëminent place of importance. Immediately surrounded by a million other people, jostling against thousands in the crowded streets, or roughly jammed into the express subway or elevated, pushed out of the way or along the way by human animals, maddened by the thought of time lost or time to be gained, one may well wonder what is man, that he should receive any special attention?

We watch fifty thousand at a baseball game, and

the insignificance of the individual is depressing. We stand in the top of the Woolworth Building and, looking down, we ask pathetically: "Of what significance is man?"

We see the hearse hurrying to the cemetery, the casket let down silently but unhesitatingly, the grave covered with flowers, and then watch the people drive quickly back to their homes or places of business. The world moves on. Nothing seems to have been interrupted. What is man, that one should be mindful of him?

The writer of the eighth Psalm felt his own littleness as he looked up at the stars which shone down on him. There were so many! They made one think of the greatness of the world and all that went with it. Man seemed such a little thing! But that universe which seemed so big to the Oriental centuries ago was little and insignificant itself compared to the one which we know. Then the writer had no idea that those stars might be as big as the world, and even his world was small.

Now the thought of the greatness of the universe is staggering. So far away are the stars we have to measure their distances by light years. Light travels at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second. This means about six trillions of miles in a year, or about sixty-three thousand times the distance of the sun from us. For every six trillions of miles a star is distant from us we speak of it as a light year. The nearest star is more than four and one-half light years from us. So big are some

of the planets and so many are there of the worlds, our globe is but a speck of dust. And man? What is one in a billion on such a speck? If man from the top of the Woolworth Building seems so little, how would he look from Venus? . . . Man seems to be a mere atom or electron. The thought of the size of the universe compared with the size of man is certainly a humbling and even a depressing one.

Then the study of the natural history of man has only exaggerated our sense of depression. That has truly humbled us. Natural history, we have learned, carries us back through a long, long process. We know fairly certainly that there was pre-civilized man many, many thousands of years ago. Conservative estimates lead us this far back. Through a long process, from crude and humble beginnings, man has come. So there are those who hastily shout out: "If this is man, if such was his beginning, he is too much akin to the animal world to count for much!" Shocked and even sickened by such thoughts, these people either lose interest in the very serious study of man's highest qualities or they join the host of cynics and say that man is only a biped who has a superiority complex. The study of the natural history of man steals the halo from his head, and robs these people of their respect for him.

If Job asked plaintively, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?" and the writer of the eighth Psalm looked at the starry heavens and marvelled, saying, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" it is no

wonder that many have become depressed in our day as they have thought of man, and been impressed with his littleness and his apparent insignificance. Indeed, it is no wonder that many have become cynical about man's place in the scale of life, and especially in regard to the faith about his present and his future which religion proposes. At first glance man does not seem to count for much. The history of man, the size of man, his place in the scheme of things—all seem to humble him.

What is man? Why should one give him much thought? If there be a Spirit of the Universe, a God, why should He pay man any particular attention? At first glance man certainly seems to be disappointing and his place in the universe seems to be humbling.

II

But the wise student will take more than one look, and he will give this creature more than one consideration. A glance will not suffice. Let us be fair to man. Fairness demands that we look at what he has produced that is of worth.

Man may be little, but he has done some big things. Look at his best art, his finest paintings, his greatest literature, his most perfect architecture. Look at the Giant David, at the Sistine Madonna. Hear the stirring music of Handel's Messiah. Read the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Tennyson and of Browning. Walk through the Notre Dame and St. Peter's. Slowly pass through the halls of

the Metropolitan Art Gallery. Glance at the shelves of books in the Library of Congress. Look at understandingly and walk observingly through Westminster Abbey. These views will tell you something of what man is. They will tell you something of what he has done. And they are only a few illustrations.

But man has not only accomplished; he has become. He now is an intelligent will. This is what exalts him. This is the fact which makes him worthy of serious consideration. He can will and love. He can kneel in prayer and rise to accomplish the hitherto impossible.

Consider only something of his ability to rise above his physical surroundings. "We are in a desperate state," wrote Captain Falcon Scott to Sir James M. Barrie, just before his end in the Antarctic field of ice, "feet frozen, no fuel, and a long way from food; but it would do your heart good to be in our tent to hear our songs and our cheery conversation." Surely there is something worthy of consideration about one who can thus become a master of those circumstances which have the power to take one's life! One thinks that the Psalmist wrote with reason, "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour."

Therefore one insists when we would know man we must know what he has and may become. It may not be very cheerful simply to think of that which has been in man's distant past. Especially does a study of natural history often discourage one

who has always placed man on a pedestal. But science can never rob an understanding mind of its rightful faith nor steal from a truly religious heart its unwavering trust. For such a mind and such a heart knows that science can only give us a process. Science cannot possibly give us an explanation. It cannot tell us the goal of man or the purpose of life. Science can tell us "how," but not "what" and "why." Therefore,

> *"Let science prove we are, and then*
> *What matters science unto men,*
> *At least to me? I would not stay."*

III

Of course, each person must decide for himself what will be his angle of viewpoint. It is true that no one in any laboratory can prove the reality of our brightest hope and most confident faith. Even what is called religious knowledge is not the kind that forces itself on one. It is not like making a test in the chemical laboratory where, whether he wants to do so or not, one must believe water is H_2O. In religion one must make a courageous venture.

But that venture is not contrary to reason. We have a perfect right to choose to think of man from the viewpoint of goal rather than simply from that of beginnings, or of process. It is true that one's belief about his goal must be decided by faith. But it is faith assisted by reason. Or, if you choose to put it so, by reason assisted by faith!

Some faith, however, you and I must exercise.

Life is a venture. Religion is a venture. Indeed, Christianity is life's greatest venture. Hope and faith, at the heart of religion, are ventures. Upon some faith each one must decide. But religion is not distinct and unique because it requires faith. It has been pointed out with undeniable reason that the man of unbelief exercises more faith than the man of faith. It surely takes more credulity to think that man has no purpose and no worthy goal than it does to believe that he has these. Especially is this true when man has moved through the centuries toward a higher and finer life.

IV

There are some of us who with earnestness shall insist that man is not all flesh, but that he has a noble purpose and a worthy goal. We shall look in the direction in which man is moving rather than the place from which he has come, in order to give an answer as to what he is.

"A fire-mist and a planet,—
A crystal and a cell,—
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where the cavemen dwell. . . ."

That's part of the story. But it is not all. There is another part; and it tells of

"A picket frozen on duty,—
A mother starved for her brood,—
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood. . . ."

Whatever man once was, he is now more than body, more than mere flesh.

Even in the midst of depressing circumstances man rises above his environment, and breathes the free air of a spiritual life. A writer tells of a shabbily dressed Scotchman who, after labouriously climbing a hill in Edinburgh, sat down near him and, after a few minutes of quiet, said, with a strange mystic glow in his old face: "Do you know, I am a shoemaker by trade. I live down there by the Cowgate. It is an unclean place. There is swearing and drinking and fighting there all day long, and every now and then I come up here and take a look at *this,* to remind me that I am not all flesh." Every person has that capacity for appreciation of spiritual reality.

We know in our hearts how we feel. We are conscious of something greater than our physical selves. We echo his words when we hear Pascal say: "Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature; but he is a reed that thinks. It needs not that the universe arm itself to crush him. An exhalation, a drop of water, suffice to destroy him. But were the universe to crush him, man is yet nobler than the universe; for he knows that he dies, and the universe, even in prevailing against him, knows not its power."

Even when we are conscious that our life has not been all it ought to have been, we long for the higher experience. With Tennyson we say:

> *"Oh for a man to arise in me*
> *That the man I am may cease to be."*

And we know that such a longing cannot go unsatisfied in a reasonable universe. That which is right is the highest one can choose. And when one chooses the right, he is choosing with God! What is that creature who can choose the highest? The answer to this question will go far toward answering the question, "What is man?"

Somehow we are conscious of a divine spark within. The translation of Dr. Moffatt sounds a responsive chord in our hearts: "Thou hast made him little less than divine." In each one the spark may be fanned into a blaze. It is this divine fire, not bodily physique, which makes man what he is. However that spirit has come to be ours, we know it is ours now! And we therefore know something of what man may become.

Then where shall we look to learn the answer to our question, to the cave man or to Phillips Brooks? To the Australian bushman or to David Livingstone? Indeed, when we think of how even man can degrade himself, let us then ask, What is man, Sam Hadley the swinish drunkard, or Sam Hadley the pure, the righteous, the Christlike? . . . We shall not look at what he has come from, either man as such, or the individual. We shall look at his proper goal.

Our minds and hearts answer with perfect accord when we hear Hugh Black with vehemence insist that to know man we must look, not in the Garden of Eden, but in the Garden of Gethsemane! Here is man at man's best! Here is the Representative Man.

Here is the Character unto which we ought constantly to be coming, more akin to whom we ought daily to be growing!

V

And so, as we think of the future, we ask once more, What is man? Just a bundle of bones and sinews and flesh? When you look at that silent, cold form do you see the one you once knew so well and loved so dearly? . . . We linger by the open grave in Shakespeare's Hamlet, and hear Hamlet exclaim:

> *"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,*
> *Might stop a hole to keep the wind away!*
> *O! that that earth, which kept the world in awe,*
> *Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw."*

But we ask: Is man just a piece of flesh which will go back to the dust? Or can we believe that somehow—in a moment of time, or through the ages—God breathed in him His own living Spirit? We must ask the question and get an answer for ourselves. Is man simply a developed protoplasm, a handful of dust, a skeleton, or a living spiritual son of God?

True religion is risking one's very all in the belief that the highest possible is God's purpose for man, and that the best is too good to be lost just with the passing of a few years or the disintegration of a physical body. . . .

With such a faith we hear the clear, ringing words

of Jesus: "When ye pray, say, Our Father. . . . In my Father's house are many mansions. . . ." And we read with joy: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!"

IX

IS HELL A REALITY?

"Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."—MATTHEW 5:22.

"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."—MATTHEW 25:30.

THERE is much doubt today about the possibility of a hell. The causes for this growing doubt are many and varied. Some of them are found in reasons which our clearest thinkers have forcefully presented. Then questioning inevitably grew out of our general intellectual advancement.

I

In the first place it was to be expected that the pendulum should swing from the extreme dogmatism such as was represented by Jonathan Edwards. That was a horrible picture of an angry God, the revenge of whom, or even the relentless justice of whom, was satisfied only with the ceaseless burning of men, women, and children. A lake of fire was pictured in most materialistic language. The imagination was inspired with terror.

Unquestionably many were greatly affected by the kind of preaching which was based on this dog-

matism. Many were even impelled and driven to a different and better kind of life. The harrowing doctrine undoubtedly developed fear. Much of it was godly fear which worked repentance. The story is told of a great-grandfather of Sam Jones, who listened to the weak and indifferent preaching of a fellow minister who seemed to be making little impression upon a congregation which showed marks of sin. The fiery ancestor of Sam Jones could not restrain himself. He jumped up and shouted out, "Brother, these people are sinners, sir, big sinners, on their way to death. If you won't tell 'em where they are going, sit down and let me tell them!" And so it was that he did preach with vehemence and power. As a result, scores begged for forgiveness, and turned from their sinful lives.

In spite of the good, however, which resulted from even a materialistic doctrine, the hard and harsh theology became itself a cause for reaction. To go to such an extreme was almost certain to mean that a revolt would follow. Just that did occur, as all of us know. There were too many who preached this doctrine without any feeling of sympathy or kindness. There were too many who used it simply as a means to obtain desired results. There were those who forgot the preëminence of the spiritual, and therefore spoke too much in the language of materialism, even offering with unreasonable certainty verbal maps and blue-prints. Of course, these people went too far, and as a consequence thinking people came to demand a reasonable interpretation of our experi-

ences. Even the masses felt in their hearts that something was wrong. A revolt was to be expected. The inevitable result was that the pendulum swung to the other extreme, and thus many rejected the whole teaching.

The doctrine came to be rejected by many also because they felt that it did not harmonize with the character of a good God. How, they asked, could a good Deity who loves His children see them suffer in a manner similar to the one pictured by these teachers? Here again, of course, in the background there is to be seen the subtle effect of the harshness with which the doctrine was expounded. People felt that love was not harsh and hard and bitter. They, therefore, began to insist that a good God could not permit such suffering as the hell which was being described.

There is also another cause which must be stated. It is that people did not want to believe in a place or experience of punishment. The wish was father to the thought, parent of the belief. In too many instances is this true now. The cause is not one which will be generally admitted; still there are not many who like to make such a frank confession. Nevertheless, this is a prevalent cause. Many people simply refuse to believe in hell because they do not like the idea of hell.

Although there are other causes for abandoning the belief in hell, these cover the chief reasons for a failure on the part of so many today to believe as our forefathers did in regard to this matter.

The issue is one which should be faced fairly and met honestly. It is unwise to dispose of it lightly. It demands serious consideration. The belief in a place or experience of future suffering has been too long insisted upon for it to be quickly and easily disposed of. It cannot be ignored. It demands attention.

II

Let us turn, therefore, first of all, to the Word of God for the teaching we can find here. Immediately it is admitted that much is said here about such a place or experience. Even if we do not deal with the Old Testament, in the New there is a profusion of statements which definitely refer to a place or an experience of suffering or punishment. In Matthew 5:22 Jesus says: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." It is also Jesus who speaks in Matthew 11:23: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." Recall also the words of Mark 9:47: "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." Remember, too, the story found in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke about Dives. The words of the twenty-third verse are: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

The words of Matthew 25:41 are most emphatic: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Here is an array of statements which certainly cannot be lightly cast aside. What are we going to do with them?

Someone says the many sentences even in the New Testament which refer to hell cannot be taken literally. Too often they contradict each other. For instance, in one place fire is referred to; in another it is indicated there is total darkness. Certainly we know there cannot be both fire and darkness at the same time. Such contradictory statements indicate the uncertain nature of the very record itself. Some people say, therefore, they will just throw away the entire doctrine. They will not accept the teaching.

They forget, however, that these statements were not to be taken literally. They are symbolical, and it is in just this fact that we get our cue for a satisfactory understanding of the teaching of the New Testament. Certainly it is impossible to be dogmatic about the kind of place hell is. As a matter of fact, our question does not even refer to the nature of the place or experience. We are not asking whether either one can be accurately described. We are simply asking whether the term represents something that is real. Is there reality here?

The very fact that these pictures are only pictures is a clear indication of this. We have here some symbols. Of course, when one looks at a picture of a person one does not expect to touch or see the

person himself. One sees a representation of the person. Even the best picture is imperfect as a representation. Reality is in the person, not the picture. But the picture does indicate that there is somewhere a real person. And the symbol or representation gives one some idea of what to expect when he sees the individual. Thus the symbols or representations which we have here unquestionably have for their purpose only that of conveying an impression.

III

With the consciousness of this truth let us examine some of the pictures given in the Bible, as they are related to our present experience. This is the kind of examination that is revealing. The touchstone of experience is dependable!

There is the symbol of darkness. Reference is made to this in Matthew 22:13: "Then," said the king to the servants, "bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." We know that even an attempt to describe the effect of such a statement is unnecessary. For one to live in total darkness, with not a ray of light, would mean the loss of all reasoning powers. The effect is terror-inspiring. . . . Yet, we know that when we fight against the light of truth in Jesus Christ we lose our way in the darkness of a Stygian night.

It is written also, "They shall be tormented." Well, whatever one may believe about the future, when we are normal, we are harassed and torn with

torment in the present every time we engage in wrong. Here is a hell most of us have known at some time. A man whose family is one of prominence said sometime ago, after a life out of the Church and without the benefits of religion: "Some people may argue about hell; I know there is a hell; I have been in it." That man did not speak alone. There are multitudes who can use the same language he used. When we are normal, we suffer here and now every time we do that which is against our highest and clearest moral judgment.

Then there is the symbol of fire. Many people have not been able to appreciate in any way this symbol. This has been the picture which has called forth more violent opposition than possibly all the others combined. "Surely this cannot be real," many have said. Yet they have spoken of denial of real experiences in life. For there is certainly something that burns with terror inside our hearts, our consciences, whenever we go contrary to the highest sense of right which we have.

> *"Trust me, no torture that the poets feign*
> *Can match the fierce, unutterable pain*
> *He feels, who, night and day, devoid of rest,*
> *Carries his own accuser in his breast."*

In the last analysis we know that it is folly to deny the reality of something that is a part of experience. When one is at one's best he suffers every time he denies that best self and follows the dictates of something lower. There has been too much hell in this

world for one to deny it. We can smile about it; we can refer to it jokingly; we can even seriously deny it. But the fact of hell meets us again and again. At some time, at least to some extent, each of us has felt the terror of it. One is reminded of the time when Renan was at the height of his power, bringing his severest criticisms upon the religious life of his day. He was poking fun at the curious dogmas of the Church and shocking many of his religious friends. An old lady wrote a letter to him which contained only these words: "Hell exists."

IV

If it is by experience that we know something of the reality of hell, then we have a proper basis upon which to consider the future. It is personality which persists, which lives on in the future. If, therefore, I am I in the future, consciousness and the experience which goes with consciousness must be carried on out there. I shall not be a different person, but the same person.

It is this interpretation that Dante gives to the subject in his classic poem. The punishment which comes to his sufferers is a continuation of the kind which naturally results from their experiences on earth. The murderers are still murderers; their punishment consists in having to remain in blood as deep as they have shed. The miser is still a miser. With fast-closed fist he lives on. But there is now no money for him to hold. His miserly spirit is the very cause of his hell.

When Dante comes to the most profound symbol, he writes of cold: the absence of all heat and light and beauty. He says there is a place where the condition is spiritual death. Here is wretched misery, for the soul does not act. Dante at least approximates the truth. For the man who gives himself over to any sin finds his sight darkened at first. But he can get to a place where there is no struggle at all. Dante's picture is, therefore, true to human experience when he paints the lowest hell as the place where souls are utterly selfish, dead to all ambition, dehumanized and benumbed. . . . Surely such is hell, here or anywhere. And further, if such be the characteristic of one here, mere change of residence will not alter or make different the same personality. We know people who are in this kind of hell here. It is not to be expected that a change of residence will help their situation. Rather, on the other hand, it is to be expected that it will only become worse, that increase and exaggeration of environment will only make worse their state. A hell which begins here is not likely to end simply with the passing of time or the change of residence.

V

When love tries to redeem, love itself must face the reality of hell. Sir Wilfred Grenfell tells us about once becoming discouraged with the meaning of life. A man had been saved who, while he was drunk, had cut his throat right into his larynx. Says Dr. Grenfell: "While he was under my care, I found him a

most attractive personality, but at the end of it they took him out and hanged him, for in a moment of drunken fury he had killed his wife."

Then Grenfell tells of one night when a woman was brought into the hospital on a stretcher. She was dying of terrible burns. The history of the case showed that her husband had come home drunk and thrown a paraffin lamp over her. The police, the husband and the magistrate were summoned. The words of Sir Wilfred give us the most vivid description: "I can still see the miserable creature, standing at the foot of the bed between the policemen, watching every movement of his dying wife; the magistrate, stooping over the bed, warning her that she had but a few minutes to live and that within an hour she would be standing before her Maker. He kept imploring her to tell the truth as he took her dying statement. At last her eyes were raised to the face of the man, the father of her children, the man who had sworn so shortly before to love and protect her 'until death us do part.' Here he was now, her murderer. The silence at her bedside, as we waited for her reply, could be felt. As her eyes fell upon the familiar features, I can only suppose she saw him as once he had been before drink claimed him. For a new light came into them, and she passed out with a lie on her lips to save him. 'My God! It was an accident,' was the last thing she said. . . ."

Such an incident from life speaks too vividly of hell's reality to necessitate discussion. But it also tells us of a love which seeks to save and redeem.

That love must face the reality of hell. Yet it is willing to face it in order to save from hell the one who is loved. The human love which is here seen possibly followed the best way it knew, wrong though it was. But it was seeking to save.

There is a divine love, however, which can save because that love is wisdom and power, even while it is love. He who is the incarnation of love divine can redeem us from our lowest selves, and make out of us men and women akin to Jesus Christ.

X

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT EVIL?

"O, my god, make haste for my help."—PSALM 71:12.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."—PSALM 121:1.

THROUGHOUT the entire Biblical record we hear the plaintive cry of man pleading for deliverance from trouble. Constantly there ascend earnest expressions of intense longing that aid might be given. The Biblical record, however, is but typical and representative of the whole story of man's life. Over and over again we hear the cry of men and women that help might be given in the day of evil.

I

This means, of course, that individuals have recognized that they have been in the midst of trouble. From the time of Adam to the day of Job, and on through the centuries that have elapsed since then, there has been so much earnestness expressed in the desire to be delivered from evil that it has naturally been taken for granted. Rather, we may say, its power and its terror have been forced on people. We have had to face evil. In many guises it has made its assault on us. All in some manner have felt its influence. Often in a subtle form, but always with

power, it has assailed men and women in both anticipated and unexpected ways.

We have not merely seen individuals suffer; we have also witnessed affliction of countries, of nations, of racial groups. The situation of Russia today, in spite of all its hopeful signs, all of which we are glad to recognize, is one that forces upon us the fact of tragedy. Millions are suffering. For some reason they are hungry; they are cold; they bleed; they die. A glance at China reveals a state of warfare, of ignorance, of prejudice, of almost unbearable suffering on the part of the poverty-stricken. The pathos of the situation is enough to depress one. In India we see hope through the writings of some of her friends; but surrounding those signs of hope there is despair and sorrow and heartache and misery. . . . Multitudes, both as individuals and as large groups, have had misfortunes, adversities, and calamities.

For those who have not developed the power of imagination and visualization, often a concrete tragedy in a person's life comes with terrific force. John A. Rice, in *The Teachers' Magazine,* tells this story: A Pullman train was speeding through the state of Pennsylvania. In the crowded car were seated a man and a woman. Every few minutes the lady reached up and kissed the man. The people began to giggle and laugh. Again the kissing went on. It became very embarrassing to the man. Finally the gentleman arose and addressed the car thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, you do not understand. We have just received a cable that our third and last son has been

killed in the trenches, and I am taking my wife to the asylum." When the awful fact was known, the laughter of the passengers was turned to grief. There were tears and sobs of sympathy. They were ashamed and hushed in the awful gloom. It required a touch of reality to bring these people to their senses.

There are many now who live so superficially that they do not see beneath the surface of things. They refuse to see the pathos of life. They never feel the heartaches of mankind. Physical and mental suffering, however, has been widespread, and when one experiences some tragedy in his own life, he cries with a bleeding heart and an agonizing soul: "O, my God, make haste for my help."

But more terrible than any other experience has been that in man's own heart. With a glance inside one's soul, one has sometimes beheld the blackness and terror of an evil and sinful state. Then he has from the depths cried for help. There has been a condition words could not adequately describe.

II

What answer shall we give to all this? What shall we say to all these things? Many answers have been given. Each one has been chosen by many people.

We can, first of all, ignore trouble, evil, or sin, as far as it affects others. When it is seen in the lives of our fellowmen and women, we can treat it as the priest and the Levite did the man who was robbed and wounded on the road to Jericho. We can walk on by, or take a glance at it, and then do nothing

more about it. We can simply ignore the whole matter. We can sing either literally or figuratively the words of the once popular song and say: "We will let the rest of the world go by." We know there are many who apparently prefer living in the very lightest way possible. They stop their ears to the plaintive cries of wounded souls. They close their eyes so that they cannot see.

But they cannot escape, for sometime the shock will be forced on them. Maybe it will not come as it did for Job, who lost his oxen, his sheep, his camels, his servants, and his children all at once; maybe it will not be the exact experience which was back of the cry of the Psalmist when he implored: "O, my God, make haste for my help." But there certainly is tragedy in the world, and even to live on the surface of life will not make possible an escape.

There is the more positive course of simply giving vent to our own desires of pleasure. That is the answer of many young people. We often find it popular because it is the easiest solution, and it seems to do more for us. "Let us enjoy ourselves while we are young," we say; and then the habit becomes fixed, and we go on enjoying ourselves, or at least trying to, the rest of our lives. Pleasure offers an easy solution to the evil we see. Others may have their troubles; we will indulge ourselves in all kinds of diversions. . . . Inevitably, of course, in a world like ours, that state of mind leads to failure, downfall, defeat, and a worse tragedy than one has dreamed of.

Then there is the possibility of hardening our own heart, if trouble should come to us. The day comes when we can no longer escape. What we have witnessed in the lives of others comes to us. We ourselves experience trouble, sorrow, evil of one kind or of another. Then we may harden our hearts, grit our teeth, clench our fists, and bear it like a man, with never a tear or never an expression of sensitiveness.

One more course, however, is open. We can try to fool ourselves. We may dupe our minds—delude our intellects. We may simply deny the fact or reality of evil, trouble, sorrow, sin, and everything else that is not good. There are those who do this. They say: "God is good; God is all; all must be good. There is, therefore, no such thing as evil." This is possibly the easiest way out, if one is willing to close his eyes, cease thinking, and stultify his conscience. Of course, it is a tragic thing to do, for then one is not ready to remove evil; there is no sorrow which calls for comfort. One is not ready to lead another out of the terror of sin; there is no sin. A sensitive soul, a bleeding heart, a terror-stricken conscience—all these are simply unrealities.

Most people, however, are as yet unable to delude themselves in such a manner, and therefore some other more satisfactory way out must be found. What shall it be?

III

There has been given one other answer, in the way of a solution, to the whole problem. But it is an

exacting one. It demands, first of all, that we face the fact and recognize the terror of trouble, sorrow, sin. One must admit it all, face it all, in order to meet it. There is to be no sidestepping; there cannot be any outright denial. As a matter of fact, one sees that so serious is the whole situation it is worthy of the attention and response of the Deity Himself. So it is, Christianity tells us, the very Deity has faced the issue and met the situation. The life and death of Jesus Christ is the story of the nature of His response.

Centuries before the coming of Jesus, men saw that there must be some such answer. Hear the word of Isaiah: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Jesus tells us clearly what God's response is and why it is that. The very condition demands and is worthy of a response on the part of the Deity Himself. In the life and death of Jesus we see the attitude of God. In the life and death of Jesus there is vividly portrayed the forgiveness of God. As costly,

as terrifically expensive as forgiveness is, God offers it to us in and through Jesus.

That which disturbs us more than anything else is sin. Sin is the terror of the world. It is the tragedy in man. Whatever may be done to relieve any other kind of evil, this demands most positive attention. Only in the forgiving, cleansing, purifying power of God is there relief from sin.

Unquestionably the relationship of sin to all evil is more subtle than most of us have recognized. That we must admit. But whatever one may say in regard to this fact, there is the unavoidable necessity of finding relief somehow from this power. Here there is real evil. Many have discovered that Jesus Christ is the only physician who can satisfactorily prescribe for it. In Him they have found power to redeem, cleanse, and save.

IV

"But," someone says, "there is still the trouble and sorrow and even the sin of the world. There is still this trouble after the forgiving, cleansing power of God has responded to the appeal of my own heart. What shall be done about all that?" And the answer is still the one God has given us in Christ. There is tragedy; there is sorrow, trouble, sin. It is a condition worthy of God's attention. No other response is satisfactory; no other is worth anything. Therefore, says the Psalmist: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Anything below that for one's self or for the world is futile.

Of course, much can be done in a partial way to help physical trouble. But even that will be effectively done only to the extent the Christ Spirit controls our hearts. God wants to do something about the tribulation of the world, but He must use us as agents through whom He can work. His purpose and power of sympathy and help may be seen in Jesus. In that same spirit He would minister through you and me.

To live indifferently, to revel in pleasure while the world bleeds, to shut one's ears and harden one's heart against pathetic appeals, to deny the reality of trouble—all these constitute aid far below the help of the hills. "Help, Lord!" we instinctively cry when we feel the cutting power of trouble. Then in our wisest moments, when we can think most clearly and distinctly, we answer: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills."

Therefore, we must give the answer to those with whom we live just as Jesus Christ has given it to us. In giving such an answer, in making such a response, the people who have caught the spirit of Jesus or portrayed His very soul, have in their own trouble received help from the everlasting hills of God. To give such aid is to receive help. It seems that is the mystery of Christianity, but a glorious mystery it is. The Cross is the only possible solution for the problem of sin. But the Cross gloriously blesses every one who bears it.

And one must bear it for the sake of all the sorrowing, sinful world. This is the only way to help.

It is the most expensive—it costs—but it is the only effective way to deal with evil. There is a mother who hates intoxicants. Her very soul rebels against their damning nature. But her son falls when he is tempted; he becomes a drunkard. How will she deal with this? You know. She quietly takes it all on her heart. She bleeds; her suffering is untold. She knows what the Cross is. Her love for her boy makes her bear it. When he asks for forgiveness, of course he is pardoned. But think of the suffering that has preceded that pardon!

There is a wife whose love has been sinned against. The sacred vows of the holy marriage have been forgotten or scorned by an immoral husband. Is there a way to save him? When that wife bears all the black weight of that sin on her pure, spotless soul, she walks the Via Dolorosa with Jesus Himself; but the Cross on the crest of the hill is the means of redemption! A writer has told us of such an instance. The testimony of that corrupt husband was: "I can never forget the look of anguish that came over her face as the meaning of what I had done dawned upon her. She turned pale, and clutching at the pain in her heart she sank upon the bed. I could see my sin torturing her. Then she arose and I expected the storm to break on me, but instead she said, 'I love you still, and I will not leave you.' Then I saw in the anguished love of my wife the meaning of the Cross. From her love I stepped up in thought to the Cross. I was a redeemed man from that hour." "And his subsequent life," says Stanley Jones, "has shown it."

That is the kind of solution, and the only kind of solution, which is effective for the trouble of the world. The evil of the world cannot be ignored. It must be relieved. There is no satisfactory relief unless in it all and through it all there is sacrificial love. The sin of the world is tragic. Certainly there is no satisfactory or real relief from this save by means of atoning love. The Cross is indeed the answer and the response to all conditions of life which demand effective response. And to receive the benefits of such sacrificial love necessitates one portraying that same spirit. In such an act one knows the help of the hills. One knows it as he points and leads others to its power.

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there, that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

There is the answer to what we shall do about evil; and there is the only answer.

XI

SHALL WE DISPENSE WITH THE EMOTIONS?

"When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—ACTS 2:37.

WE are hearing today much adverse criticism being expressed in regard to the use of the emotions. Expression is freely given to unlimited depreciation of this delicate human temper. Many of those who must be counted among our clearest thinking leaders boldly assert that emotionalism has been indulged in too much. They insist that much harm has resulted from the free use of our emotions. In an especial way has religion suffered.

I

Although this seems to be a rather strong denunciation, we must all admit the danger of emotionalism. Whatever our judgment may be about the proper use of the emotions, all of us must recognize the fact that there is a harmful extreme to which we can go. That there is positive danger in a pronounced tendency to go to such an extreme is also evident. Most of us have suffered from the sins of others in this respect, even if we have not been conscious of our own guilt.

The public speaker, if he is wise, knows that he must constantly be on his guard. If he is one who eagerly desires the most accurate truth, he is always on his guard against the attack which this unbridled spirit will make on him. When one becomes unduly excited and begins to talk without thinking clearly, he surrenders to his emotions. Then there is imminent danger. Accuracy will probably be lost in the confusion of thought. Many an orator has become so excited and had his feelings so completely to master him that his message lost its worth because of its inaccuracy. Often even positive harm has come to the auditors because they were unable to discriminate between excitement and intellectual integrity. In a day when oratory has been considered a virtue, per se, such was inevitable.

When a speaker realizes what mistakes he has made and becomes conscious of the foolish extreme to which he has gone when his emotions mastered his better judgment, certain results are almost inevitable. Some reaction is unavoidable. The best and the one to be wished for is that of penitence. If a man can be heartily sorry for his misdoings so that the remembrance of his act is grievous to him, he will be helped. He will turn his back on such mistakes. He will feel like apologizing to the people who have also been wronged. Nevertheless, that they have been mistreated is evident.

It may be that only disgust will fill the man's mind. Or he may sink into a state of abject humility, closely akin to remorse. On the other hand, one may just

become callous to such crimes of the soul, and continue to sin against the highest feelings we have.

Certainly for an individual who, either in the place of public gathering or even while alone, gives vent to his emotions without any reasonable restraint, some kind of harm is inevitable. Emotionalism means the unrestrained play of the emotions. Judgment is either dispensed with or relegated to the background. The feelings, rather than clear thinking, dominate and control one. The baneful effect of this must be evident to all, whether it occurs in a political gathering or in a religious service or in the privacy of one's personal life.

Moreover, the use of the emotions, as important a part of the human personality as they are, always results in harm unless there is an outlet for ethical expression. Unless there is some kind of expression, thoroughly moral, one of the finest tempers of man is dulled and deadened. Such a fact means that the emotions must always be accompanied in their expression with something else. There must be some kind of activity which is completely ethical. Without this there is certain to be both a loss of judgment and other inevitable harm.

II

Yet while all of this should be readily admitted, it must also be said that the emotions have played an important part in religion. While the evil of emotionalism in a general way may be seen by all students of the nature of man, it is also to be ad-

mitted by everyone that the emotions have been a great factor in determining the nature of religious activity. From the very beginning of Christianity to this day the emotions have been a mighty force in bringing things to pass.

There was the day of Pentecost, when the one hundred and twenty were gathered together in the upper room. "There came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The people who were gathered in Jerusalem were all excited and asked, "What can it mean?" Then while some sneered, Peter stood up to preach. Following his deliverance, the people cried out: "Brothers, what are we to do?" Undoubtedly they were greatly moved, and unquestionably the results which were seen in their lives came because of this fact, too.

On another day Peter and John were going up into the Temple when they met a lame man. This man they healed, with the result that great excitement spread over the people. Peter spoke to them again, preaching a sermon on repentance. Again religion was touched with emotion. Over and over in St. Paul's preaching the same characteristic effect may be seen. Because the people were moved by his words and by what he did, they were susceptible to the Gospel message.

Down through the Christian centuries we go to find the same spirit in evidence during the Reformation. Indeed, it may be said in all fairness that the Reformation was possible because the common people were greatly moved. Their emotions were powerfully affected.

In those days when the peasants could not preach, they sang hymns. Lindsay asks us to "witness the poor weaver of Magdeburg, who took his stand near the statue of Kaiser Otto in the market-place and sang two of Luther's hymns, while the people crowded around him on the morning of May 6, 1524. The Burgermeister coming from early Mass heard him, and ordered him to be imprisoned, but the crowd rescued him." It is only an illustration of how the Reformation swept over Europe because their feelings were greatly stirred.

Everybody is familiar with the moving power of John Wesley's preaching and Charles Wesley's singing. Thousands were converted and began to live a new life because their minds received Christian truth, but also because they were moved to make life decisions for morality, righteousness, holiness, Christianity. Those coal miners stood out in the early morning to hear John Wesley preach. As they listened, tears rolled down their cheeks, making white ridges on their blackened faces. They moaned in agony over their sins and begged God's forgiveness. They turned to the Christ because they were powerfully moved to do so. It is only another graphic fact. Through the years Christianity has actually

made progress because it has made use of the emotions.

III

But now, in this day of enlightenment, people are saying the use of the emotions is of doubtful value. Many are asserting that such use is dangerous, is, indeed, of positive harm. A brilliant writer of unusual intellectual gifts recently set forth almost this same view in an article carried by a popular religious journal. He sharply criticized the use of the emotions, going so far as to express doubt as to the very worth of the actions caused by a display of the emotions.

Have we reached a time when the emotions should be kept in check? Are they to be stifled? Certainly there is much happening today that would indicate that this is the course of wisdom. Here is a religious worker who abandons accurate statements and deals carelessly with facts because his emphasis is on the emotions. The justification in such actions is given in the contention that the end justifies the means. One can afford to go to the extreme in working up the emotions in order to get people to decide for the right, for religion. Very well. But what kind of right is it which abandons accuracy? And what kind of religion is it that will permit just this? It is no wonder men are saying that, if this is Christianity, it is not what its leaders have professed it to be. And, further, such facts as these do prove that the use of the emotions is dangerous.

If one goes out of this immediate religious field, there is glaring evidence of the apparent righteousness of such a judgment in the needless mob violence which has swept over our country at various times. Unnumbered innocent victims have surrendered their lives just because people have been swayed by their emotions. Great harm has been done. Personalities have been sinned against, and lives have been lost.

Both social and religious groups do offer us reasons for criticism of the emotions. Forgetting the physical harm which has been done, we see that personalities have suffered. The extremes to which people have gone have dulled and deadened one of humanity's finest tempers.

IV

What shall we say about all of this? Certainly it must be readily admitted that uncontrolled emotionalism has done much damage. Let us, therefore, face the undoubted danger of emotionalism. Let us confess its sins. The facts make necessary all of this acknowledgment.

We have a right, however, to go further. In fairness we must gather together all possible facts; and there are other facts besides these which have had to do in the past with a wrong direction of the emotions. The truth is that the emotions are intrinsically necessary. People act only when they are moved to act. No one can possibly live a life of much worth without any use whatsoever of the emotions. Indeed, to act at all one must be moved to

do so. Thought, feeling, decision, act—this is the logical order.

Cold logic accomplishes practically nothing, by itself. It is, moreover, of little attraction. Poetry is certainly far more interest-compelling than bare reasoning. Of course, Christianity is thoroughly logical. It is accurate with the exactness of truth. But Christianity is also poetry; it is philosophically sound; it is beauty. And just here is its power to move people, because it touches the emotions.

We are all familiar with the contention that Christianity is morality touched by the emotions. This may not be all it is, but this is certainly part of the truth. There are feelings here which lie too deep for utterance, but they give expression to the life. Moved by Christianity, men even learn faith in each other. The feelings constitute the gripping and mighty force.

> *"Taught by no priest, but by our beating hearts:*
> *Faith to each other; the fidelity*
> *Of men whose pulse leaps with kindred fire."*

Surely here the feelings are powerful! When mere logic alone will not move one, there are experiences which so combine the two that one is led to trust, or to resolve, or to act.

The emotions are greatly in play when we are challenged to be our best selves. Here, indeed, we see the emotions in the highest use. It was with this nobler idea in mind that Lincoln appealed to William Scott, the lad from Vermont, who had been

sentenced to die because he went to sleep at his post. The President visited him, chatted about his home, looked at his mother's picture, and then, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, said, "My boy, you are not going to be shot. I believe you when you tell me that you could not keep awake. I am going to trust you and send you back to the regiment. But I have been put to a great deal of trouble on your account. Now, what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill?" When Scott spoke of money, Mr. Lincoln said: "My bill is a very large one. Your friends cannot pay it, nor your bounty, nor the farm, nor all your comrades. There is only one man in the world who can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that when he comes to die, he can look me in the face as he does now and say, 'I have kept my promise, I have done my duty,' then my bill will be paid." It was only a short while after this William Scott made the supreme sacrifice on the field of battle.

The reason men and women do not give themselves to the cause of Christianity with some such devotion as that is not, in most instances, because they fail to know enough. It is just because they are not moved to act. The boldest, the frankest of them will tell you they have little feeling about the matter. When they do feel enough, they act. They give themselves to the service of Christianity. They make Jesus Christ king.

Christianity can never triumph without the emo-

tions. The finest living and the truest heroism which this religion expects are possible only when individuals are moved to the high experience. Response to the appeals of deepest human need will be made only by those whose sympathy, compassion, and love have been touched by the Master's spirit. Outside the walls of Jerusalem Jesus stood, and realizing the pathetic condition of His beloved people, He was powerfully moved. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," He cried, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" The heart of Jesus was breaking. A little while afterward He trudged out of this same city up to a cross-crowned hill, and surrendered His life because His love for humanity moved Him to do so. Men do not die like that, in such a spirit, unless they love. Christianity is love carried to the *n*th degree and empowered with Divinity.

Cold logic is not enough. Bare truth is not enough. At the heart of Christ was compassion, yearning, devotion. Every follower of His will be characterized by just this same spirit. Indeed, this spirit is the very soul of Christianity. When we come to be at our best, we earnestly pray:

> *"O for a glance of heav'nly day,*
> *To take this stubborn heart away,*
> *And thaw, with beams of love divine,*
> *This heart, this frozen heart of mine!"*

XII

CAN CHRIST SAVE AMERICA?

"Love your enemies."—MATTHEW 5:44.

"My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight."—JOHN 18:36.

CAN Christ save America? Whatever the answer, we know that most people do not seem to believe He can. Apparently most of the political leaders of America are either suspicious of what the adoption of His principles would mean, or they recognize that He and they are opposed, in principle, to each other.

Many of America's politicians are sure that Christianity is too idealistic. It would be a boon if all who think this would boldly announce the fact. Some few have done so. If all who think this would announce their thoughts, the lines would be more clearly drawn; the issues would be plain to all, and the necessity for determining the right course more evident.

Certainly some whole-hearted choice should be made. Either the principles of Christ or the principles which deny His spirit should be chosen. The fair basis for reaching a decision must be contained in the answer to the question as to what Christ is able to do. What is His power? Before we accept Him

we want to know what He can do. Can He indeed save us? That is the vital question.

I

In order, however, to approach this question with the right viewpoint, let us first ask what the methods of the nations of the world for safety have been, in order that we may compare Christ's method with these. Before Jesus taught, practically the entire world always relied on force for its safety. The nations were accustomed to force. They believed in it. That was about all they knew. The very country to which Jesus came, as small as it was, and therefore apparently unable to cope with the greater powers of the world, relied on the strength of arms. Israel had her soldiers. And when these were unable to protect her, she made alliances with other and more powerful nations. She made a compact with Egypt in order to protect herself against Assyria. Her political leaders often advised compacts of such a nature.

Israel is a typical illustration. Large or small, the ancient countries of the world relied on the power of armies. They believed the way of safety was in this direction. They could be saved by strong armies. The provoking question, however, is this: Did either her armies or her compacts with other nations save Israel or any other country?

Of course, the outstanding illustration of this belief among the nations was Rome. Her military power has become proverbial. Rome conquered because Rome had great armies, people say. The Roman soldier was

the backbone of the nation. This is what the people of Rome thought, and so did the rest of the world think. But the provoking question which will not keep down is this: Did the Roman soldier save Rome?

In our own day we have again seen the philosophy of force portrayed in the experience of one of the great nations of the world. Germany believed that the way of safety and the means of conquest were in military strength. The might of armies can make a nation triumph over everything, they believed. But they were apparently mistaken. The years 1914–1918 taught Germany that her philosophy was mistaken. Did one say "taught Germany"? One wonders. One wonders if Germany thinks she was wrong. Likely the people of Germany even now think that their failure was in the failure to be well enough equipped with men and supplies.

However that may be, this we know! There are millions who are confident that Germany was moving in the right direction. They will not state the fact just that bluntly, but they feel sure that military strength is the way of safety and the means of real power. There are many people in America who are insisting that the naval power of America must be strengthened, the army must be increased in size, and the air service must be "made adequate for defense in time of war." America, they say, will not be safe unless all this—and more—is done. Any other course is futile. It is worse than futile; it is an invitation to the enemy to trample us under foot. America can be saved only by military strength, an

invincible army, an unconquerable navy. These—with all they mean—can save America, and these alone. . . . Are they right? Can military force save America?

II

If such can save America, Christ cannot. For He does not offer any such power. His is a different, an entirely different programme. If militarism is the way of safety, Christ cannot save America. That is evident. It is a fact which should be squarely faced. Christ and militarism are not in agreement; they have nothing in harmony with each other; they are diametrically opposed.

If some one asks how such an assertion can be made, and insists one should be sure of his ground, it is only necessary to call attention to both the teachings and life of Jesus. He faced the problem Himself. He met the issue squarely at the temptation. Would He use the methods of the powers of the world as the means to usher in His kingdom? That question He had to face, and He settled it once for all time. He would not. He would use spiritual means, and these alone. Later in His life He asked: "Could not I call twelve legions of angels, and my Father would give them?" But He refused to do so. And then, talking to Pilate, He plainly said: "My kingdom is not of this world."

It is true that the people were expecting a military leader or an angelic being with unbelievable earthly power for a Messiah. But Jesus refused to be such

a Messiah. It meant that the majority would reject Him. It meant that the masses would misunderstand Him. Only a few of the Jews would realize and understand. But He paid the price. His was to be a spiritual kingdom, and His power was to be spiritual. He would not permit it to be otherwise. Truth and love were His allies; these were His means of victory.

It was a most strange and unusual course to follow. Jesus refused to take up arms, He rather was willing to suffer Himself. He did not murder; He was slain for us, that we might know the nature of God. He *was slain,* that all men, women and children might actually be children of God; and thus, in a very practical way, members together of the same divine family. He did not take the life of any one; he *was slain* in order that all enmity on the part of man toward God, and all hostility between man and his fellow man might be destroyed. His spirit is seen in the act of that Englishman, trying to nurse a German soldier back to life out in a shell-hole, to whom the German said: "Strange, if you and I had met in the trenches, you would have tried to kill me for the sake of the Mother-land, and I should have tried to kill you for the sake of the Father-land, and here you are trying to save me for the sake of the Brother-land."

III

The political leaders did not understand Him then any more than they do now. "What is truth?" sar-

castically asked Pilate. "What power has truth? It is foolish to rely on that." When Jesus began to speak of a kingdom which had truth as its centre and love as its dynamic, He was using language unfamiliar to these people. Politicians and government heads, with some exceptions, of course, have through the ages shown a remarkable kinship. Their minds have run in just about the same channel, though that has been no proof of their greatness! Most of them have felt sure that the only way of national safety and of national power was in military strength and domination in material things. Let a nation lay hold on everything possible and then be sure to keep its powder dry. That is the sure means of national power.

Nations believe in the power of the physical. They place their confidence in material resources. They feel safe with great armies, navies, and aeroplane departments to protect them. In these they place their reliance. In the strength these afford, nations believe.

Somehow, as Christian men and women who belong to the nation, most of us seem to believe the same thing. When we think in terms of the nation, we immediately move away from the teachings of Jesus to the philosophy which has held sway with national leaders from the beginning. We do not seem to be able to think nationally in Christian terms. At least, it is a very difficult thing to do.

Of course, as individuals, we say we can trust Jesus. We profess to believe in His teachings. We

assent to His philosophy of life. Outwardly we even commit ourselves to Him. We call Him our Saviour. We will even go through some form of ritual as an outward manifestation of an inward commitment. We assert that Christ is able to save us individually.

But when we think of Him in relation to the nation—that's a different matter. We know too well that He did not save Israel, as Israel had hoped He would. He led no army. He sat on no throne. He wielded no sceptre. He carried no sword. That kind of leader surely cannot be depended upon to save a nation! It is all right to use Him in one's individual life; but a nation certainly cannot be expected to depend on such a leader as that!

Of course, the people of India wonder why we talk to them about Christ saving them, and especially about saving them for another world, when we ourselves are unwilling to trust Him even for this world. They see the glaring inconsistency, and they ask us bothersome questions. The people of China, too, wonder why we call America a Christian nation, when we deny in our national life the very principles which Christ taught. We understand that we make a difference in our individual life and our national life, but they cannot understand why. And the inconsistency is a glaring one.

We believe in living peacefully with our neighbours on the same street. We teach our children not to quarrel. We seek to allay fear of personal attack from our neighbours. We refuse to resent every per-

sonal encroachment. We listen to the preacher tell us to "pray for those who despitefully use you;" and we try to do this. We do more: we acclaim the Sermon on the Mount as the guide for our lives. We try positively to live the life of Christ. We actually, at times, do good to those who harm us.

But, as individuals and as nations, we feel there is a great difference. The teachings and principles of Jesus just aren't practical for nations. Truth and love are all right for individuals. But surely a nation is not expected to love its enemies. And everybody knows that truth must be backed by strong armies. It is interesting to note, moreover, that in time of war, propaganda must be purposely and deliberately sent forth if the feelings of the people are stirred enough to make them act. After the war, when we sit down and coolly think, we will know that the propaganda was purposely coloured and deliberately distorted. . . . No, bare truth would fail to infuriate us enough. Plain truth is not enough. In war we must believe that the enemy represents the host of evil, while we are on the side of right. Every nation feels that way. And for that reason every nation feels justified in using the force of arms to "protect the right."

No, truth and love do not seem to be suitable as guiding principles for nations. Certainly they cannot be left just to themselves. Other political leaders besides Pilate have jestingly asked: "What is truth? What power has it?" Even if truth is to be the principle of a nation, truth must be supported

with strong armies and powerful navies. What strength has truth? It can never be trusted alone. It possesses no inherent power. It is foolish for a nation to depend on truth, or truth and love when these are unsupported. That is what many practical-minded national leaders tell us. Are they right? If they are, then Christ cannot save America, or any other country. He is impotent to help.

IV

But one wonders whether He is. As disappointing as the progress of Christianity has been in the world, the power of Christ has been the marvel of all serious thinking people. His triumphs have been many. The world is entirely different since His life and death. And wherever individuals have given Him right of way, He has worked unbelievable transformations in their lives. He has certainly saved them in a most real way. They have known a power, unseen but real, which deeply satisfied them. It is true that many of them have had experiences similar to that of Jesus Himself. They have suffered, but one wonders if that was, or is, defeat. Francis Thompson, in his *Veteran of Heaven,* gives us a description of the triumphant defeat of Christ:

"Oh Captain of the wars, when won Ye so great scars?
In what fight did Ye smite, and what manner was the foe?
Was it on a day of rout they compassed Thee about,
Or got Ye these adornings when Ye wrought their overthrow?

" 'Twas on a day of rout they girded Me about,
They wounded all My brow, and they smote Me through the side:
My hands held no sword when I met their armied horde,
And the Conqueror fell down, and the Conquered bruised His pride."

Can a nation afford to adopt such a principle of life? Is salvation possible this way? Do not truth and love need to be bolstered up with strong armies and material force?

"Christ said not to His first conventicle,
'Go forth and preach impostures to the world,'
But gave them truth to build on, and the sound
Was mighty on their lips; nor needed they
Beside the Gospel other spear or shield,
To aid them in their warfare for the faith."

Can Christ save America? Can Christ save the world? Is He able to save the larger group, as a group, as well as the individual? . . . There are some who believe He can. Since force has failed in every instance of recorded history to save a nation, it certainly could do no harm to try the method of Christ.

XIII

WHAT IS FINAL IN RELIGION?

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—ACTS 4:12.

IT may truthfully be said that religion is popular today. The subject of religion is discussed in all kinds of gatherings. Undisputed sway of the field, however, has not been given to any one sect or creed. Religions and religious groups are many and varied. They also seem to be on the increase. Even the eager student finds it difficult to follow with strict accuracy all the lines of thought suggested by these aggressive sects. The eager seeker for truth is possibly even more baffled.

I

The man who really wants to know what is right may often be greatly disturbed. I well remember one Sunday in a Southern city when I listened to several different messages presented by leaders of different religious groups. In the evening, about nine-thirty, we were leaving the theatre in which a Biblical contortionist had done all kinds of stunts with the Book of Daniel. These mental acrobatics were, of course, possible only on the basis of both literal and symbolical interpretations. After such a

day it was easy to see how many people are baffled and confused. One could not help remarking on the fact that with difficulty even an earnest seeker for truth would find it necessary to use all his mental powers in discriminating.

Every type of religion seems to be pressing its interests, both "at home and abroad." In some of our larger cities the representatives of religions which have held sway in India, China, and Japan are establishing themselves. In other continents many so-called pagan religions are, with marked tenacity, refusing to surrender to appeals of the missionaries of England and America. Aggressiveness characterizes the activities of the stronger of these. Mohammedanism, for instance, is possibly making more advancement in Africa than any other religion on that continent. If any one thinks the world is going to surrender easily and quickly to the appeal which any one group makes, he ought to take a glance at the situation as it is today in Japan, China, Africa, India, Russia, South America. The person who is not discouraged will at least turn away for more serious thought and meditation.

II

Christianity, in which so many of us are vitally interested, is not going to be given the field by a quick surrender. As a matter of fact, the question which we must face is this: What will ultimately possess the field? Does Christianity represent what is final in religion?

Whatever the world's ultimate religion will be necessarily depends on the nature of that religion. There must be certain values which characterize the final religion. Let us, therefore, face fairly the demands which are rightly made, and ask whether the religion of Jesus can meet them.

In the first place, the religion which stands the test must be able to offer a standard of righteousness which cannot be surpassed. If there is another standard which will rank above that which is offered, there is always danger of this one being superseded. The Christian's standard under those circumstances can take first rank only for a time. It serves *pro tem.*

But this is exactly where Christianity shows its tower of strength. Christianity refuses to leave an open gap here. "Whatsoever ye would that men do to you, do ye also to them," says Jesus. He places stress on the inside, and demands that all be right, holy, pure within. Not merely outward acts, but inward spirit must be thoroughly unselfish, true, good. Even the unseen motives are to be properly adjusted to the standard of unselfishness.

There can be no difficulty in social relationships when men and women accept the demands of Jesus. "As I have loved you, so you are to love one another," says Jesus. Read such a statement as this in connection with the Sermon on the Mount, and it becomes easy to see why Christianity should hold the place it does even now. "Be ye perfect," says the Founder of Christianity. He demands the highest

possible, that which cannot be superseded—perfection! Christianity, at least theoretically, meets the ethical test.

And when its principles of righteousness are applied, we discover that the practical test, which is the one of really vital importance, finds Christianity able to perform. Where men have given it a chance, Christianity has made physical and social environments what they ought to be. It has so influenced the surroundings of men's lives that they have become altogether higher than ever they could otherwise have been. "There is no leveler like Christianity," said Jonathan Edwards, "but it levels by lifting all who receive it to the lofty table-land of a true character and of undying hope both for this world and the next."

III

Then there ought to be considered in connection with the ethical content of any religion its intellectual recommendations. The two are closely related. Just here, however, many have indicated that Christianity is lacking. They say that it cannot meet the modern idea of life. The basis for this assertion, however, is the attitude of many who are the professed friends of Christianity; it is not the teaching of Jesus Himself. It was Jesus who made religion thoroughly scientific. It was He who said that we were to follow the truth regardless of what it is or where it leads. His words are: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." He placed truth fore-

most. Scientific investigation is welcomed by Christianity just because in its own nature this religion has the virtue of desiring truth.

But sound ethics and scientific truth are not enough. We have been told of a letter written by the late Baron Friedrich von Hugel to a friend in America in nineteen hundred and twenty-two, about the two levels of life. He insisted that both the scientific and religious levels are necessary for a complete development of personality. "For myself," he added, "I must have both movements . . . my soul must have somehow two lifts—a lift which is always going up from below (the scientific movement) and a lift that is always going down from above (the religious movement). I must be seeking and be having. I must both move and repose." The summary clearly indicates a fair demand which is made upon any religion which purports to be the ultimate. A religion which gains the hearts of men and holds the field of the world must be one which portrays both of these characteristics.

Christianity is willing to face the demand. If one sneeringly says that this strictly religious movement means mysticism, a ready admission is made. It must be remembered, however, that the scientific nature of Christianity saves it from being lost in the mists and clouds of hazy uncertainty. Yet such a state does mean, not merely the possibility of repose, but also a present life, a life of continuing and persistent vitality.

A religion which gains the hearts of men cannot be

mere history. It must offer more than a record of past accomplishments. This, Christianity does. Born in the past, nineteen hundred years ago, after centuries of preparation in Judaism, it is nevertheless a religion of life. The centre and soul of Christianity is Jesus Christ. He lives. Christianity offers the world not a dead man, but a living Saviour. Thousands testify to His present, living, personal fellowship.

IV

Yet, all of this a religion might have and yet not be worthy of being the world's ultimate. Something else is required. How the religion proposes to function is vitally important. The very nature of our present world is such that it refuses to be forced into anything. Every phase of life is illustrative. Something more persuasive than force is in order. President Watson, of the American University at Cairo, wrote, "The only force that will avail to win the Moslem is love. I used to think that the greatest power in the world was truth, but truth alone cannot win the Moslem. There is something mightier than truth, especially for Moslem lands and lives. It is love. If we would win, we must love." This is exactly what Christianity proposes. Its method is that of the persuasive power of love.

Christianity even says that God is love. One of its basic statements is that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." It was a religious revolution to speak of God, the Deity, caring,

loving, giving. What an appeal! Stanley Jones tells us that he noted at his Round Table Discussions three ways by which men hope to see the universal: "First, by Command, that is the Moslem way; second, by Comprehension, the Hindu way; third, by Christ, the Christian way."

But there has been some criticism that the way of Christianity makes the discovery of God too easy. The religion which offers us the best way to discover God will, of course, be the ultimate religion. The answer to the criticism that the way of Jesus is too easy, that it is too cheap, is that it demands our all. One who discovers God by the method which Jesus offers must give himself completely to God in Jesus. God does appeal to us in Christ by love. But He asks all that we have and are.

He asks, and there are those who, in love, give all they have and are to prove the reality and finality of this religion. In giving their all they lift the world to the very standard of righteousness and goodness of which we were thinking a few moments ago. Think of Carey, Mackay, Hudson Taylor, Keith-Falconer, David Livingstone, Stanley Jones, Albert Schweitzer, and Wilfred T. Grenfell. Christian medical missions alone have made possible the service which has blessed unnumbered. There is a vivid picture of how Christianity meets the pragmatic test.

V

Yet, there is even a deeper note than just love. There must be a greater power than care. And

there is—in Christianity! God's love in Christ is the kind which sacrifices. It goes to the Cross itself.

The only religion which can claim to be ultimate is that one which faces the fact of sin and is able to meet it. This, Christianity does. There is sin. Christianity does not deny it. Rather, the Christ on the Cross would save from sin. *Here is finality: the Cross.* It is absolutely impossible to conceive of anything higher or greater than divinity making the sacrifice of the Cross.

And here is power, power to save, power to redeem. The Cross meets the pragmatic test. There are thousands who sing:

> *"At the Cross, at the Cross where I first saw the light,*
> *And the burden of my heart rolled away."*

Whatever may be said in explanation of their experience, we do have the fact of the experience!

The Cross, which means the Christ of the Cross, the Christ who forever bears the Cross, has the power to redeem. The living Christ can save, save in every way from sin and the power of sin.

Sam H. Hadley, the rugged religious worker of Water Street fame, was speaking one night to a gathering of poor wrecks who had come into the door of the mission-hall. Among the observers who were present at the service sat a trained physician who had been drawn to the service merely out of curiosity. The vigorous appeal of the missioner for an immediate decision on the part of his hearers to live a new

life finally so impressed the physician that he could not restrain the protest of his medical, scientific objection to it all. He arose and, with marked feeling, said, "Mr. Hadley, you have been appealing here with a glowing passion to these drunkards for a new and a made-over life. I speak as a physician to say that you would not talk to these men thus if you had ever seen what the inside of a drunkard's stomach looks like." Quick as a flash Sam Hadley replied: "Sir, I had a drunkard's stomach, and Jesus Christ saved me from it, and saves me from it now."

Whatever one's personal reaction may be to such instances as that, there are entirely too many who can testify to the power of the spiritual Christ to save from all that defeats us, for their testimony to be ignored. He has saved thousands from all that is low, sordid, and mean. But most important of all, He also saves unto all that is noble and good and true. Under the inspiration and power of His spirit, unnumbered persons have in some way approximated His character. Think of these: St. John, St. Paul, Francis of Assisi, William Booth, Henry Drummond. The very names suggest a cloud of witnesses.

"God became Man that we
Might learn what a man should be!
How tender and true and strong,
How patient to suffer wrong.
When He for our sakes did die,
And rising, went up on high,

Still God, and still Man, He sent
A Guide to the way He went,
Who should give to us, day by day,
Grace to live lives His Way.
God became Man that we
Might learn what a man should be!"

Christianity proposes to make men like Jesus Christ! The highest, the finest, the best the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. The living Spirit of God, present today, can, does, make us akin to Him who is the Ultimate. It is impossible to picture a better or a higher than Jesus. A religion which can transform men, women, and children to His likeness is the world's ultimate religion.

XIV

THE CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE

"Fear not, for I bring you good news."—LUKE 2:10.
"He who has seen me has seen the Father."—JOHN 14:9.

EVERY individual has his own idea about how the world is run, and what will be the outcome of it. We cannot avoid belief of some kind about the character of the universe. We either think some spirit controls it or that there is no personality to guide it. We think there is an intelligent power back of it or that there is no force to control it. And we conduct ourselves on the basis of what we believe about it.

I

Some people say chance rules everything. Nothing in the world or in the universe is dependable, they assert. Of course, we can choose to believe that if we want to; and, it may be added, there is often apparent and unwelcome reason for such a belief. There have been those who thought that chance—sometimes chance gone mad—was the only god of the world. There are still those who think this. They consider that the universe is

"An eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort, unmeaning and vain."

Others say fate rules the destinies of men. There were those in ancient Greece who so thought. Fate, with never any personal sympathy, was the only god they knew. Many today worship the deity of fate. That is, all the recognition they give is to such a deity. Bare principles, impersonal rules, cold laws—these govern all things, they say.

There are many possible thoughts about the world, its nature, its character and its controlling spirit. There is no deeper desire that thinking people have than to know the true interpretation of the world and its nature. There is, moreover, possibly no greater longing which people have than that they may know that the universe is friendly. Our hearts burn within us when we try to hope it is. F. W. Meyer, speaking for literally millions of people, when asked what question he would put to the sphinx were he given just one opportunity of asking a question, replied that he would ask: "Is the universe friendly?" That is what all of us want to know. We earnestly, and sometimes with nervous excitement, desire that it is.

But honest people want facts. And all of us must admit that honest doubt deserves kind consideration and fair judgment. One wants to believe the universe is friendly, but he cannot honestly interpret the facts as indicating that it is. The facts seem violently to oppose one's breathless hopes. Such a person, however, just because he is honest can keep ceaselessly following the light and seeking the truth until something which will satisfy both mind and heart is discovered.

Certainly no theory of chance, no belief in fate, no conception of harsh, impersonal law can satisfy the human heart. Even those who say that any one of these best interprets the facts for them show clearly that their hearts are not satisfied with the interpretation. Such interpretations, moreover, do not make possible a happy life of noble, idealistic character. That fact most people will admit. About the best one can do on the basis of any of these beliefs to which reference has been made is to become a Stoic, and bear the brunt of the onslaughts which result from an outraged fortune. To do that, however, is to contradict the interpretation one gives to the facts. Further than this Stoicism is cold and hard in its character. It makes one live in the arctic winter, ever doggedly refusing to freeze to death, yet with never a hope for spring. Such a belief is most unsatisfactory; it makes impossible the highest and brightest kind of life.

II

Christians know a better way. It is the way of hopeful and confident trust that everything will eventually be made thoroughly right. Sometimes it is anything but easy, yet those with the faith of Christianity sing:

"Upon His providence I lean,
As lean in faith I must;
The lesson of my life hath been
A heart of grateful trust."

It is true that such faith says: "Live for tomorrow." But it promises a tomorrow in which to live, and for which to live. It challenges one to go through the darkness, but it promises a bright new day after one has passed through the black night. It does not offer all the evidence one might wish for; but it never contradicts one's best thinking.

In another city, a few years ago, a good Christian woman was stricken with paralysis. She could have said that there was sufficient reason for abandoning her former Christian hope and belief. After a life of goodness, for this to come upon her was a reason for doubting the trustworthiness of the Power of the world. She could have cursed God as Job's wife suggested that he should do. But she did nothing of the kind. With beautiful simplicity of faith and reverential spirit of mind she radiated the sunshine of confident belief. She called a few friends about her, organized a prayer-meeting, and now, at each service, takes an offering for the worn-out ministers of the Gospel. Self is lost in loving service for others. Her trust is sure and her faith serene. "Though the conditions of life seem to be evil, even unto death, yet will I trust God and serve Him." This is what her life says.

III

Of course, it is true that one must ask: Is the universe at heart black or white? Is it evil or good? But those who have lived the highest kind of lives have been willing to stake their last possession on its

inherent goodness. They have confidently affirmed and tenaciously held to the affirmation that it is friendly and good and true. In spite of discouraging facts, they have contended that such confidence is representative of the truth, the facts of life.

Such faith, as has been noted before, is sure that one's highest hours are not traitors. And in those highest hours one sees so clearly that these hours become affirmative of the belief that the Force back of the world has the best character possible.

Some noble specimens of manhood and womanhood have been exhibited in this world. Some wonderful characters have walked up and down the highways of this planet. And they have been lives of joy, as well as of idealistic worth. What made them possible? That is the question in which one is interested. Well, whatever else may be said, they grew out of a healthy, wholesome belief. Certainly one must admit the relationship of faith to life, of thought to deed.

But that which becomes a more serious consideration is this: there must be something in the Spirit of things to which such idealistic belief and living corresponds. There must be something in and back of the universe which in character is representative and typical of the best in the highest lives which have been lived. It is but natural and logical to think that this is true. It would be most unnatural and illogical if the best in men were higher than that which is at the heart of the world. How, one asks, can the spiritual Force of the universe produce a higher life in man, a nobler character, than itself?

That is the thought-provoking problem; and a serious question entirely in order it is. God must be as good as the best man who has ever lived.

Of course, such faith may not be simple and easy; but it is reasonable, even while it presents a challenge and a test. It may go on ahead of actual knowledge; but it never parts company with reason. This kind of thinking is itself harmonious with the best reasoning one can do.

Those who have trusted their highest hours, their clearest vision, and their noblest aspirations, have confidence that they know enough to depend upon this fact. Surely the best we have derives its force and power, as well as its very nature, from that which is the Spirit of the universe. That is only reasonable.

"Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it?"

There has been one among us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, who had such faith perfectly and who implicitly trusted the clearest vision of His soul. He confidently assures us that such faith on our part is natural and reasonable. As a result of that belief He lived in a practical way not merely the highest life the world has known, but the noblest character the mind of man can possibly imagine. Praise and honour are accorded Him by millions.

Of course, there are those who dissociate Him from the Spirit of the universe. Maude Royden heard a

speaker in Hyde Park, one Sunday afternoon, attacking the providence of God on the ground that the war showed Him to be cruel or heedless. She says that the crowd listened to him with interest, doubtless thinking: "Well, God must be horribly cruel to allow such things to happen." Then the man turned from his discourse and began to attack Jesus Christ. Suddenly a man in the crowd who was not what we know as a Christian, who did not in any way believe Jesus was God, was filled with the fury of indignation. He exclaimed: "Say what you like about God; there is nothing bad enough you can say about Him if He really made the world like this; but let Jesus Christ alone!" The crowd, which had been with the speaker while he arraigned the justice of God, cheered and applauded, saying: "Yes, let Jesus Christ alone!"

That is a gripping and thrilling incident. Most of us feel our hearts throb with unison with the sentiment contained in that last sentence. But this is the vital and all-important point to remember: If one praises Jesus for His character, one must reject His judgment, or one must come to have the same confidence in the friendly character of the universe as Jesus had Himself. The judgment of Jesus led Him implicitly to trust the Spirit of the universe. He was sure that one could depend upon the character of the Power that is in the control of the world. It is not blind force; it is not chance; it is not fate; it is not harsh, hard, cold, impersonal law. It cannot be any of these. It is friendliness and goodness

and truth. It is all these together, and all of these made personal.

> *"The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?*
> *So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving, too."*

Jesus believed this; He lived on the basis of it. Jesus trusted the universe, and the Spirit of the universe did not betray His confidence. That is the happy, glorious, heavenly truth! The Spirit of the universe did not betray His confidence. He joyfully summons us to make the same test!

But Jesus goes further. He does not simply say He has faith in the Power of the universe; He says His own character represents that Power. He says, "You believe in me, believe also in my Father. My character comes from Him." Jesus gives us the final proof in the kind of reasoning already referred to when we claim that the best lives spring from the very Spirit of the universe. That is reasonable ground to stand on, He tells us; for He Himself says that He derived all His nature and character from the Power of the world and of the universe.

Thus the great assertion of Jesus is that God in character is just like Him; and reason agrees. For reason says: God must be as good as the best man who has ever lived; the creature cannot be superior to the Creator. Surely this is reasonable. One must say that God is as good as His best creature. God must be as good as Jesus Christ. Even were one not to admit that Jesus is God incarnate, even if one were to insist that Jesus is only human, reason would

lead him to this much truth. Jesus could have derived His character from no other source save from God. This is what Christianity says: There is a God like the Christ of Bethlehem, the Christ of Judea, the Christ of Jerusalem, the Christ of Calvary! The Almighty is still the great and powerful One, but He is also the tender and loving Deity. That is the confidence of Christian faith! It receives its verification in our highest hours; and it is justified by the experience of Christ. It makes its venture on the reality and trustworthiness of Jesus' words and life. It requires a venture; but the venture is justified.

One must decide for himself what he believes, what he thinks, and what will be his real faith. He must answer the question; he cannot remain in a neutral attitude:

> *"What think ye of Christ, when all is done and said,*
> *Like you this Christianity or not?*
> *It may be false, but do you wish it true?*
> *Has it your vote to be so if it can?"*

IV

But when Christianity, when Christ, gets one's vote, when one has met his first duty and discovered for himself that God is good, the happy satisfaction which comes to his heart justifies the venture. Winter turns to spring; and life sings its happy songs of love. Such a person identifies his life with Jesus, and takes his stand with Him, believing the affirmation of this religious genius to be dependable. He knows the joy of Jesus. It is because this faith

makes the God of Jesus one's own God. Such an identification is manifested in the character of the life itself. Such confidence reveals itself in character. One proves that one has the confidence of Jesus by living the character of the Christ. A righteous life is lived in the full blaze of a heavenly confidence.

Such a steadfast faith asserts itself in a character like Christ's, and brings both peace for the present and confidence for the future. When that confidence is definite and certain, and expresses itself in a Christ-like life, no matter what the conditions and circumstances of life, one has a peace which goes far beyond all human understanding. Spiritual triumph is certain.

Polycarp's faith is true and real. Those who come to take his life find Polycarp in the upper chamber of the cottage. Though he might have departed, Polycarp says, "The will of God be done." When he hears that his enemies have come, he goes down and converses with them. The bystanders marvel at his age and constancy. Then he orders a table for those who have come to take him, in order that they might eat and drink. He asks for an hour to pray; for two hours he cannot hold his peace.

They bring him to the city on the high Sabbath. "What harm is there in saying that Cæsar is lord?" one asks him. "I am not going to do what you counsel me." "Swear the oath, and I will release thee; revile the Christ," says the magistrate. "Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no harm. How then can I blaspheme

my King who saves me? " . . . As they tied him to the stake, preparatory to burning him, he only smiled. And there are many who are quite sure that even the flames did not burn away that smile. They must have made it even brighter and more glorious.

One may not rid his experience of sorrow, anguish, or suffering; but he has a mental and a spiritual satisfaction which characterized the life of Jesus Himself.

Our hope for life—our hope for time and eternity—is to be sure that God is like Christ, that God came to perfect articulation in Jesus. There will be a thousand hard and bitter experiences in life to contradict the fact. Only let one remember that others have met those some experiences, met them and triumphed over them. If we can have the same confidence in God Jesus had, nay, if we can be sure that God has the same character as Jesus, the dark night of fear has passed, and the bright, new day of truth and love is breaking on us in its full glory. Yes, the joyous songs of Christmas are singing in our hearts, and not for a day or a week, but forever! All our problems for the present and the future are met, solved, and answered. We will know that some time we shall understand, and all will be well. We can unreservedly trust all things to a God like Jesus Christ. Browning is right, when he asserts:

> *"I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,*
> *Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee*
> *All questions in the earth and out of it."*

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